

# The Hartford Seminary Foundation

## Bulletin



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# Suppose It Hadn't Happened

RUSSELL HENRY STAFFORD

President

The Hartford Seminary Foundation

[Editor's note: This address was given before the Civitan Club of Hartford, Friday 18 December 1953, and the Rotary Club of Hartford, 21 December 1953.]

Christmas comes but once a year. When we were six years old, that was a long time between. When we get to be somewhere around sixty, that time is so short that Christmases flash by like mileposts on a superhighway, and once a year may seem too often.

For we have mostly moved up to the sending end of the giving line. Hence, whatever Christmas may mean, it reaches us in such bunglesome wrappings that we hardly take time to look inside the package. It is mostly a matter for us of tissue and tinsel and ribbon and seals. We must check lists, and send cards, and buy presents, and watch bills mount up dizzily. [We have to listen to endless carols blaring above the crowds in the streets, the same old tunes over and over again,] until we would give our ears for just one Yankee Doodle or Ta-ra-ra-ra-boom de-ay to break the monotony of Silent Night in full daylight. When finally the day itself dawns, we have to break in on our comfortable routine at the office to take a day off for long sessions of family chatter and too much food at the wrong hour, and that dull heavy feeling afterward.

For Christmas merged long since with midwinter festival. It appears that even the date was settled arbitrarily many centuries ago to coincide with a pagan celebration older than history all over Europe. The Christmas tree, the Yule log, and words like Yuletide remind us still of that background. And the personage about whom we hear most at Christmas time is Saint Nicholas or Santa Claus or Father Christmas, who is obviously as mythical as Paul Bunyon or the Man in the Moon. These reminders of our primeval forest forefathers make up still another layer of wrappings, inside the layer we add, between us and whatever there may be within this Christmas



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package, which is deposited on the world's doorstep on the twenty-fifth day of December every time the year rolls around. What then is Christmas, beneath all these coverings?

They say it is the birthday of Christ. And every year they read over again in the Churches two old stories, alike in their main features though they differ in some details, about a Virgin Mother, and a boy baby in a manger, and angels, and shepherds, and a star, and wise men bringing gifts as to a King. The stories may be true, for all we know; but they sound like legend. Truth or legend, however, they are certainly high poetry. For of them somehow no one ever gets tired. If you don't believe me, try reading for yourself the first two chapters of the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke, coming to them with open mind, simply as literature. You will be surprised how they sing themselves, and seize your imagination, and make you tingle. That is the proof of poetry, with rhyme and metre or without.

[People who believe these stories, just as they stand, acknowledge of course that they cannot be proved. They believe them because this is the sort of thing they would expect to happen, when a man like Jesus was born.] For Christ is a title, and the birthday of Christ means only, as it were, the King's birthday. What King? If you are bound to be merely factual, as I think we may profitably try to be today, he was no king at all in any earthly sense. He was brought up to be a carpenter. What book learning he had was got in what we should call the parochial school of a small town in a second-rate Asian province of the Roman Empire. When he was about thirty years old he took to preaching. His time-table is not very clear; but it would seem that it was then only a matter of months till the police picked him up for radicalism, and in short order he was executed for treason. He never made any money; when he wanted to use a coin as an illustration for a talk he was giving, he had to borrow a penny from a bystander. When he went to his death he had not a thing to his name but the clothes he stood up in. And this is the man whose birthday we celebrate on Christmas. To cap the climax, there is no reason to suppose that he was born on the twenty-fifth of December. There is not only no evidence for the day; there is not even any sure proof as to the year, though it was probably what we now call 4 B.C.

Here then are facts. And they don't seem to amount to much. If that is all there is to it, we might as well get rid of Christmas; though

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that may not be as easy as we think. The children will have something to say about it on the other side. And so will the merchants. They don't need to be told that the holiday would collapse like a punctured balloon if a midwinter festival were all it was. What keeps Christmas going, with its mixture of lullaby and hullabaloo, is the fact that it celebrates the birthday of the man Jesus, whom hundreds of millions of people all over the world are stubbornly set upon calling Christ, the King.

That is a fact which will bear looking into, in just [as objective a way as we can. Mark you, the farthest thing from my mind right now is to convince anybody of anything that cannot be solidly proved in history.] Observe first, then, that Christmas celebrates Jesus' birthday. It doesn't have to be his birthday. If he ever lived, there must have been a day when he was born. If there is no record of which day it was, then any day of the three hundred sixty five will do as well as any other, provided we all agree on it, for our celebration. And that we do.

That there should be no exact record is hardly surprising. Until after he was a man grown, no one knew what this baby would turn out to be, and therefore that details of his babyhood would some day be in demand; and even after that, [after he had been killed, and then after his inner circle of student preachers came out a few days later with the astounding tale that he was alive again, and they had seen him, talked with him, eaten with him, touched him. That tale sounded incredible; yet they told it circumstantially. There could be no doubt that they believed it. And they seemed about the last people on earth to be suspected of dreaming up such a thing, considering the dull matter-of-fact kind of men they were and the abject mood they had lately been in. To this day we cannot explain it; and personally I don't see how we can explain it away.] Naturally enough, it was not until after all these things had happened that any one bothered much about just how old he was, and where he was born, or on what day of the year. I can't tell those facts offhand about the President or the Governor, or my own minister or doctor, though these are all persons of influence in one way or another in my life. The Gospel writers did pretty well, I think, to dig up what they did about the early life of Jesus, when at last they got at it, half a century or so after the event.

At any rate, Christmas is the day when we celebrate the fact that

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Jesus was born. That is what is inside our annual Christmas package. It is an important fact. For to get anywhere a man must start at some place. And Jesus was born; for there really was such a man as Jesus. Beginning with a crackpot philosopher named Dupuis in eighteenth century France, there has been a school of critics right down to our own day,—I once knew a leader among them, Professor William Benjamin Smith of Tulane University; and a grand old gentleman and Christian he was,—a school which maintains in face of all evidence that Jesus is purely an imaginary figure. But significantly there has never been an historian in that school. This is business for hardboiled historians. And the historical faculty is wholly agreed that Jesus did live; that indeed, as to the main outline of his career, he lived about as the four Gospels say. We have to take the word of the experts. There really was such a man as Jesus.

[Such a man; but what kind of man was he? What does his life mean in history? What effect has it had upon the course of events since his time? Of course it would be easy for me to give the Christian answer; and that answer I believe. Jesus is the Saviour of mankind, the very embodiment of God Most High in our flesh, who died for us, the just for the unjust, that we may live with him forever. That is not the kind of answer I will propose to you, however. For it is not a fact that can be proved; it is a truth that must be appreciated. And it is with facts only that we are now concerned.]

It is a fact, then, that Jesus was a man with an idea which was revolutionary in his time and is still revolutionary in ours, in the sense that it turns life upside down so that it comes out right side up at last for all who take it in. That idea was grounded for him in what he thought of God; but it is an idea about man. It is the idea that men are more important than things; so important, indeed, that in comparison with men things don't count at all. He proved that he really believed it by throwing away his body when to keep his body would get in the way of his manliness, even though he was shrewd, and saw clearly how he could avoid the show-down that ended in the cross, if he chose to. Which do you and I think is more precious, persons or property? The issue even runs through American politics. Hamilton put property before persons; Jefferson put persons before property. Jesus was a first-century Jeffersonian; and he died for it, which is more than Jefferson did.



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Jesus was not the first man to hold that revolutionary idea. The great Hebrew prophets from Amos on had shouted it from the housetop. And some of them had died for it, too. But none of them seems to have been a man of Jesus' intrinsic grandeur. Nor had any of them seen as he did that the idea holds for all sorts and conditions of men, for Hottentots and Esquimaux, just as much as for citizens of cultivated countries. His thinking made universal what earlier prophets had hardly applied beyond their own provinces. If we want to put it that way, Jesus is the bottleneck through which the unique Jewish insight upon the infinite value of the human individual passed out from Israel into all the world. There is no other source than this known to historical science for all the ideals and practices of personal freedom under just public laws, of philanthropy and fair dealing, and of government of the people by the people for the people, which we gather up into the one big word democracy.

And there is no question about it but that the fact of Jesus dying as he did in final testimony to the truth by which he had lived, a truth which rings true to every man who opens his ears to it, made him, in the light of his early followers' conviction that after dying he had conquered death itself, the Hero of the ages. Above the Caesars and the Napoleons, the Nelsons and the Wellingtons, and all the rest whom humanity commemorates perpetually with wonder and awe for great deeds, this man in his simplicity and integrity looms, incomparable in his power to kindle the heart and mind and enlist devotion. When we take time really to look at him, we feel that here at last is Heroism with a capital H; as on first visiting the Acropolis at Athens I saw that there was Beauty with a capital B, and now at last I knew what it was.

No hero gets far, however, unless he starts a movement and captains it. Jesus started a movement. Its troops still acknowledge his command. It is called the Christian Church. The Christian Church is the strangest phenomenon in history. It is a unique psycho-sociological device; there is nothing like it elsewhere save in the synagogue of Jewry, from which it sprang. It is barbarically, frightfully, grotesquely, even ludicrously human. It splits itself up into dozens of divisions, bristling at one another. It gathers in all kinds of stuffy and absurd people. It often blunders like a blindfolded hen. Sometimes it commits horrible crimes. In every generation it fails shamefully, for these reasons. Yet in every generation also it succeeds as it were miraculously, because there is another side to it; call it the divine

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side, if you will. The Church never forgets who its Commander is. It never stops telling his story. Its lips never cease professing his principles, even while its actions are giving them the lie. Now and then, of course, its actions are consistent with its professions. But even when that is not so, the story it keeps on telling keeps on captivating some in every generation who take it seriously and live by it, and try to live up to the standard set by the Hero it presents. And, though they be but few, these few begin making the world over in their own communities, so that persons shall come before property. That is the way what we call civilization comes into being, wherever it does emerge, in justice, truth, and mercy, to be a humane oasis in the wilderness of money and machines.

The Christian Church is a massive fact. To it, despite its faults, we owe all that we have, which is a good deal, of dynamic good will in the world today. Moreover, it has never been willing to stop at any frontier. For the story of its Hero and Commander is such good news that the Church cannot keep quiet about it. It has no choice but to explode with it into every country and race. And wherever that good news spreads it starts currents of self-respect, moral aspiration, and social betterment. That is still going on today, in the lands to which we send missionaries.

You don't believe in foreign missions? That's just too bad. You and I are the offspring of foreign missions. If Jews and Italians and Greeks and North Africans had not gone upon the Christian mission to live in savage Northern Europe, the tribes from which we descend would have died out in their forest caves and skin huts long before we were born, and there would be no modern world, and we should never have been here or anywhere.

Now, mark you, I have not overdrawn this picture. These are the actual consequences which have come from that life which began on the day that Christmas celebrates. To them honest secular history bears ungrudging witness. It is true that the world is still a long way from being safe for democracy; that is, a long way from putting people above things. It is true that we are currently in a mess that seems to be getting worse, and in danger of blowing up the whole planet, as a global war with A-bombs and H-bombs would very likely do. Nevertheless, we have come a long way up from the woods on the road toward a decent social order under the leader whose birth we honour. And in spite of dark omens I have sound human faith to



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believe that in the power of the principles for which Jesus Christ stands supremely we shall be wise and patient enough to circumvent our present perils, and bring the human race out safely on the other side, with better days ahead. If I should be wrong, however, about the future, yet, for marvellous advance in the past, and for the great free nation of which we are citizens, and for our very existence, we should still be indebted to the fact that Jesus was born.

For suppose it hadn't happened. The Roman imperial alternative nineteen hundred years ago to the Nazarene heresy was, apart from the daffy rights of hysterical secret societies called mystery religions, only the tired platitudes of Stoicism and Epicureanism for sheltered sophisticates to munch on. The gods were dead; and the masses needed faith, which as it turned out only the Nazarene could give. The Roman imperial way with savage peoples like our ancestors was conquest and subjection, when what they needed if they were to survive and progress were persuasion and schooling, which as it turned out only the Nazarene's followers would give them. If Jesus had not been born, it passes our power of guessing as to what might have become of the world by this time; but it would certainly have been a worse world, harder, colder, more cruel than we have ever known in our historically Christian homeland. It would probably have been everywhere what only war fronts have been in our day. That alternative need not trouble us, however; for we should then have had no day at all.

Are you glad you are alive? If you aren't, go to the doctor. The trouble is probably chemical. If your doctor doesn't cure you, get him to send you to a psychiatrist. You have a quirk that must be straightened out. For, take it from me, on any terms life is a glorious thing. [That being so, for us particularly as well as for mankind in general the birth of Jesus was the turning point of history.] It is this bend in the road of the centuries, from the down grade to the up slope towards our splendid Republic, first born of modern democratic nations, and incidentally towards our own chance to be born in due course, that we are celebrating every Christmas. A gift like that is worth far more than it costs us in lists and cards and gifts and bills and, maybe, indigestion. So let's wrap it up again in all the cardboard and tissue and tinsel and ribbon and seals that custom demands, and take it home to cherish all through the year!

## Two Poems for the Christian Year

KENNETH CRAGG

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### *"SO HALLOWED AND SO HOLY IS THE TIME"*

Let hallowed be the time,  
For Christ our Lord is born:  
Let tuneful carols rhyme  
To greet His Birthday morn.

For hallowed is the earth  
Where Love incarnate dwells  
And Jesus' lowly Birth  
God's inmost Nature tells.

And hallowed be our hearts  
His welcome to proclaim:  
Goodwill His feast imparts—  
Let goodwill constant reign.

Since hallowed is our flesh,  
By Him the Word so made,  
Let awe our loves refresh  
And truth our homes pervade.

And hallowed be the mind  
To worship with the Wise:  
God's clue to God they find,  
Where Jesus humble lies.

Thus hallowed be the days  
Wherein our lives are set:  
Let time be filled with praise  
Eternity has met.

And hallowed be the land  
Where Christ a Child became,  
Let discord stay its hand  
And peace His haunts reclaim.

Let lands unhallowed turn  
To Bethlehem again.  
Shall men their Saviour spurn  
And Prince of Peace disdain?

*CHRIST'S CLEANSING: A LENTEN MEDITATION*

In the crowded Temple  
Came the Holy Christ,  
Where the traders trample  
Prayer with merchandise.

Righteous zeal consumed Him  
In that hallowed place.  
With a cord He drove them  
Fleeing from His face.

"Cleanse your desecrations,  
Take these follies hence—  
Give the House of Nations  
Proper reverence.

Thus His stern love rises  
At unrighteousness,  
'Gainst what compromises  
Man's true Godwardness.

Purge our worship, still, Lord,  
Cleanse its selfish springs.  
Lift our souls to concord  
With eternal things.

In Thy fiery meekness  
Visit every heart,  
Smite our easy weakness,  
Purity impart.

Driven from the Temple,  
Evil soon replied:  
Swore to make example  
Of a Crucified.

In supreme Example  
Love her sign unfurled.  
Cords might cleanse the Temple,  
But a Cross the world.



# Theology Emergent

MATTHEW SPINKA

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Some forty or fifty years ago when liberal theology reached its peak in this country there were many of us who became its enthusiastic devotees. It came to us with a liberating force which freed us from the shackles of the inadequate theology of the preceding period. Those who came from a conservative background rejoiced in the newly found freedom: evangelical liberalism gave us a new insight into the real nature of the Bible, into the character and destiny of man, and particularly into the social implications of the Gospel. Although it necessarily had to abandon the traditional views of conservative theology then current, evangelical liberalism was not essentially destructive, but rather constructive. As I understood its aim—for it had been everlastingly dinned into me by my teachers—liberalism was not a new system of dogmas, but a new method of arriving at religious convictions. It stressed the necessity for an open mind, for willingness to seek and accept truth wherever it was to be found, in the firm conviction that “God hath yet more light to break forth from His Holy Word.” In fact, the more abundant truth and light were to be found both inside and outside of God’s Holy Word, for He was seen to be revealed everywhere. To repeat the threadbare simile, liberalism was willing to throw out the bath water but not the baby. That was in brief how men of my generation understood evangelical liberalism, and saw in it constructive values for the better and clearer understanding of the Christian Gospel. I am aware that liberalism has since become an orthodoxy, a creed, a dogmatic system. But such was not originally the case.

Nevertheless, stormy days were ahead: some of the more recent liberals went far beyond the principles described above and brought confusion and discredit upon the movement which they professed to represent. These more recent “liberals” were the proponents of naturalism and religious humanism. Members of the former of these schools of thought were particularly successful in gaining adherents because their slogans coincided with the prevailing “scientific” enthusi-

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asms of the day. This school of theological thought proposed to find God only in nature by means of the "scientific" method of investigation. What they found had indeed some value, but was wholly inadequate for a full-orbed Christian faith, because, mainly by implication, it did not take sufficient account of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The other movement, religious humanism, became frankly non-theistic, although in its queerly perverse and self-contradictory fashion it asserted that the divine element is to be found in man alone! Yet if God does not exist, how can there be any divine element in man? Is not man a product of the cosmos? Is it not a scientific axiom that *ex nihilo nihil est*, or put more crudely, you cannot get blood out of a turnip?

It was fundamentally these latter movements which called forth, understandably enough, a violent reaction. In Europe, and particularly in Germany, the sharp distinction among liberalism, naturalism, and humanism, was not generally drawn. Hence, the European reaction against "liberalism" confused the three schools of thought and denounced them indiscriminately. Among the earliest of these protests was that of P. T. Forsyth, the honored leader of English Congregationalism, who is now belatedly recognized as one of the most outstanding English theologians.\* But the revolt is commonly associated with Karl Barth. It is with his thought and that of his milder fellow-Swiss, Emil Brunner, that the protest against "liberal" theology has been commonly associated both in Europe and in this country. Their stand was justified in so far as they sharply criticized the naturalistic and humanistic phases of liberalism, or even the inadequacies of evangelical liberalism. It must be admitted that the latter school of theology often minimized the concept of sin, often regarded man in a Rousseauist fashion as essentially good, but corrupted by his environment. Hence, liberalism strove to improve society rather than to change man. In opposition to these weaknesses, Barth formulated his principles in terms so extreme that he, too, was guilty of distortions or one-sided exaggerations which vitiated the essential message of the Gospel.

The struggle between the two schools of thought has been raging in this country for some three decades, and perhaps is not over yet.

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\* See review of William Lee Bradley, *P. T. Forsyth, The Man and His Work*, *Bulletin*, no. 15.

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There are signs, however, that its élan had been exhausted, and that it has yielded about as much benefit to the cause of Christianity as it was ever capable of doing.

In the meantime, there has emerged a new need: that of defending the spiritual nature of man. Two world wars proved clearly the superficial character of liberal optimism as far as man's natural goodness was concerned. The victory of Bolshevism in Russia carried the religious indifferentism of the era to the point of militant atheism. As such, it is the extreme expression of secularism. In all its forms, whether moderate or extreme, our secularist culture, which Dean Sperry defined as "imperfect irreligion," has made economic well-being its goal. "Standard of living," which consists in abundance of mechanical gadgets, has been substituted for religious goals of life. By scientific means we have secured mastery over land and sea, and are fast conquering the air. The technological attainments of the last hundred years are indeed awe-inspiring: during that short period of time we have progressed farther in mechanical inventions than the entire span of previous human history. It would be silly to minimize these achievements, or to advocate a return to the horse and buggy age. We cannot go back even if we wanted to. But if we cannot repudiate our mechanized civilization, we must bend it to the highest human uses. We have forgotten that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God." In short, man was not made for the economic order, as the communists assert, but the economic order was made for man.

Thus our secularized, mechanized civilization has sacrificed man to the machine, has subordinated persons to things. This is but a poor bargain. The highest value in the world lies not in things, but in men as spiritual beings, as persons. And the supreme danger which confronts us is the depersonalizing process in which the spiritual nature of man is lost. Our natural sciences make man a mere psychophysical organism; Marxian-influenced sociologies make of him a mere tender of machines; commercial and industrial orders look upon him as a commodity, a robot. He is still necessary to the creation of economic goods and therefore to the attainment of wealth. But he has no eternal value, no soul. This is the essence of modern paganism and nihilism.

Hence, I believe that the future conflict between Christianity



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and secularism will be waged principally over the spiritual nature of man. This, then, is the chief task of the theology of the future. As the blood rushes to the injured part of the body to fight the toxic invader, so theology must rally round the attacked doctrine. For if man should be degraded to the level of a mere psycho-physical organism, if his potential or actual spiritual development should be stifled in him, if he should become depersonalized, a "hollow man" as T. S. Eliot calls him, then the night is upon us. In our dehumanized civilization Christianity is still the most potent force capable of waging the battle in behalf of the highest value in the world: the transformed human spirit without which no real betterment of society is possible. May Christian theology not fail humankind in this fateful hour of crisis!

# The Transformation of the Christian Hope

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Does the New Testament literature reflect the development from a "consistent" to a more "realized" eschatology? Before this question can be discussed something must be said about the eschatology both of the Old Testament and of Jesus.

## I

The eschatology of the Old Testament was basically an eschatology for the community. It described the final outcome of God's dealing with society. The "Day of the Lord" terminated the drama of man's collective life. Presumably the Hebrews had some concept, or concepts, about the future of the individual after death. But these concepts left almost no trace in the literature which we possess. At the time of the Exile the focus of attention shifted from the community to the individual. "The death of the nation was the birth of the individual." Or, to put it more cautiously, the focus came to include the individual with the community. During this period an eschatology for the individual appeared in the form of belief in the resurrection from the dead. A number of factors may have been involved in the development of this particular form of individual eschatology. It may have been the result of Persian influence, the inability of the Hebrews to conceive of disembodied spirit, Hebrew insistence that man as a totality is related to God, etc. Certainly one additional factor was the prior existence of the community eschatology. Since Hebrew faith had long looked forward to the establishment of God's perfect reign on earth it was only natural that the expectation for the individual, when it appeared, should include participation in that era. A physical body was held essential for such participation; hence the resurrection from the dead. However it must be stressed that, while community and individual eschatology were thus united in a

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single pattern, this unity was the result of specific historical forces rather than of logical necessity. A subsequent separation of the two motifs was at least theoretically possible. In some apocalyptic literature this possibility was actualized. Where the verdict for eternal destiny was rendered at the moment of death the thought of participation in any form of earthly reign of God disappeared or was minimized. This robbed the concepts of a general resurrection and general judgment of most of their meaning.

### II

A preliminary word also needs to be said about the eschatology of Jesus. Here I state my understanding of the matter only in order that the subsequent comments may be intelligible. I do not propose to solve or even to state the controversies that arise in any discussion of the eschatology of Jesus.

I believe that Jesus announced the imminence and not the presence of the long-awaited Kingdom of God (Mark. 1:15, 9:1, 47, 13:30-32, 14:25, 60f.; in Q, Luke 11:2, 13:28, 14:12-24, possibly 19:11, 22:29f.) I interpret the classic passage Luke 11:20 to mean that the powers of Jesus revealed the imminence of the Kingdom. They were the dawn heralding the coming day. Passages seeming to imply an already present Kingdom are to be interpreted, (a) in line with the position stated above, or, (b) as modifications of the words of Jesus, or, (c) as references to the eternal aspect of the Kingdom and not to the Kingdom in the sense that it was ever spoken of as "coming." This last usage simply paralleled a usage of normative Judaism, e.g., in Berachoth 2:5 Gamaliel is reported to have said, "I will not hearken to you to cast off from myself the yoke of the kingdom of heaven even for a moment." In this sense the Kingdom was a reality at least from the moment of creation. An individual could relate himself to this reality by accepting or rejecting its yoke. But this was quite different from the expected coming of the Kingdom when it would acquire visible, compelling and universal form.

The ministry of Jesus, then, was not a sign that the Kingdom had already come in history in some new sense. It was a sign that this Kingdom was on the verge of coming. Thus Jesus still pointed forward, but the way was assumed to be brief. Presumably the event to which he pointed united individual and community eschatology. It



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was the new age in which the meek would inherit the earth, but it was also the time of the Resurrection when they would neither marry nor be given in marriage. This is not realized but futurist eschatology, a futurist eschatology that eagerly awaits an imminent solution to the contradictions both of individual and community life.

### III

The earliest Christian community was characterized by this same eagerness and expectancy as it looked toward the future. The era of the end had already begun and the final event could not long be delayed. Communal and individual interests were united in that one hope. This is clear in Acts and in the earlier letters of Paul. Note the intensity of the forward look in I Thess. 1:9f., 2:19f., 3:12f., 4:13-5:11, II Thess. 1:5ff., I Cor. 7:29ff., 15:1ff., Rom. 8:18ff. The same focus on the future is revealed in Acts, particularly in the early sections which have been the center of so much discussion (Acts 1:6, 11, 2:14ff., 3:19ff.)

As the years passed and the Parousia did not occur it became difficult to maintain the focus of attention on that event. However the attempt was made as is indicated by I Peter 1:7-13, 4:7, 13, 17, II Peter 3, and, above all, by the Book of Revelation. The character of these documents suggests that there was a positive relation between persecution and belief in the Parousia: the former encouraged the latter.

### IV

On the other hand a definite shift of eschatological emphasis is apparent in certain writings of Paul, and in the Johannine literature. Such a shift was psychologically natural. The continued deferment of the Parousia disillusioned some, and a new emphasis was needed to fill the vacuum. Even those who were not disillusioned were compelled to recognize the present as a continuing reality and to shift a portion of their attention to its possibilities and opportunities. Fortunately the earliest community had created concepts which could be developed to add significance to the ever-lengthening interim before the Parousia. The belief that Christ was at the right hand of God was capable of development into the view that He was already reigning and that the Kingdom had been established. Furthermore, the

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belief in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, originally an eschatological concept, could be developed into a view that added richness to the contemporary religious experience. As C. H. Dodd has written,

. . . they woke to something they had always known, but until then had not fully appreciated: the thing *had happened*; Christ had come. All these years they had been living on that fact, while they supposed their faith hung upon the prospect of His second coming. Now it came home to them; God's victory was won; Christ had won it; and they already shared in it. So they made the necessary readjustments in their thought without for a moment losing grip. [*The Coming of Christ*, p. 8]

This is realized eschatology!

### V Paul

In I Cor. 15:22-28, Paul argued that Christ's reign began with His resurrection. This interpretation is confirmed by a passage such as Col. 1:13, "He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son." Paul's later letters reveal a marked increase in the use of the formula "in Christ" and related phrases. This suggests an increasing preoccupation with the present relationship to the resurrected Christ, i.e., with "Christ-mysticism."

In II Cor. 5:1ff. the believer is assured that he has a "building from God" awaiting him. Exegetes differ as to whether this is to be obtained at death or only at the Parousia and resurrection. Even if the latter view is correct the affirmation that this individual, new body is, so to speak, already waiting for us leads logically to the view that the Parousia is unnecessary. In Phil. 1:19-26 Paul looked forward to death rather than to the Parousia as the beginning of the new life. Presumably he continued to believe in the Parousia and related events (see Rom. 2:5, 8:18ff., 13:11ff., 14:11f., Phil. 1:6, 2:16, 3:11, 20f., 4:5, Col. 3:4) but the shift of emphasis is made clear by a comparison of I Thess. 4:17c. and Phil. 1:23. In I Thess. 4:17c. Paul states: "So shall we always be with the Lord," i.e. after the Parousia. In Phil. 1:23 he says: "My desire is to depart and be with Christ," i.e. at death.

This latter view has transferred the crucial eschatological moment for the individual from the Parousia to death. The eschatology of the

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individual has been separated from that of the community. While the Parousia was still essential for the resolution of the problems of society and the universe, it was no longer essential for the individual.

### VI John

The situation in John's Gospel is different. The crucial eschatological moment for the individual is neither the Parousia nor death. It is the moment of conversion, the moment of decision. It is true that 5:28f. refers explicitly to a general Resurrection of the good and the evil. Furthermore, the phrase "I will raise him up at the last day" runs like a refrain through chapter 6, and in 12:48 there is a similar statement, "the word that I have spoken will be his judge on the last day." Finally, in the appendix to the Gospel, chapter 21, Jesus is reported to have referred to His future coming with the words, "If it is my will that he (the beloved disciple) remain until I come, what is that to you? Follow me!"

But over against these passages are the many in which Judgment and Resurrection are regarded as already past for the believer. He has moved out from under Judgment. He already has Eternal Life. See 3:18f., 36, 5:21-27, 6:47-59, 8:51, 9:39, 10:27-30, 11:24-27, 17:1-3, 20:31. The various attempts to separate passages with a futurist eschatology from those with a realized eschatology have been notably unsuccessful. It is probably better to recognize that the author or editor retained the traditional eschatological phrases even though the moment of conversion had become, for him, the truly crucial moment. The believer no longer has merely the earnest of the Spirit (as in Paul), he has Eternal Life. The return of Christ has been replaced by the coming of the Spirit (14:25f., 16:7ff.)

It is difficult to determine John's attitude toward the community eschatology. Frequently, the term "world" is the equivalent of "the total human community." John 1:29 states that "Jesus is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Similarly 3:16ff. and 12:47 indicate that God's love extends to the whole world. However, this is immediately broken down into an individualistic interpretation, i.e., the plan of God is fulfilled as individuals accept the message. Possibly John 12:31f. is the central passage on this topic. Approaching the hour of death Jesus said: "Now is the judgment of this world,



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now shall the ruler of this world be cast out; and I when I am lifted up from the earth will draw all men to myself." But this is not community eschatology in the sense of the earlier tradition. There is no real solution to the problem of society or history as a collective whole. The problem of nature and of the physical universe is completely ignored.

To summarize: for John the crucial eschatological moment is the moment of decision by the individual for or against Christ. The eschatology of the community and the universe has disappeared. The problem of history is ignored, in true Greek fashion.

### VII

This brief survey raises three general questions:

1. Is it true that, as is here alleged, this shift occurred in New Testament eschatological thought? Is it true, (a) that in Paul and John the Parousia ceased to be the crucial eschatological moment for the individual and was replaced either by the moment of death or of the conversion-decision, and, (b) that in John's Gospel the community and cosmic eschatology practically disappeared?

2. If this shift occurred does it indicate a direction which Christian thought may logically carry further, possibly to the complete elimination of any eschatological hope except that connected with death? Or is the New Testament to be regarded as setting a limit beyond which the transformation of the eschatology may not legitimately go? It is interesting to note that some who object to carrying the development of eschatology beyond the limit reached in the New Testament itself are anxious to maintain a Christology, which, in the fourth and fifth centuries, had developed beyond the New Testament limit.

3. If belief in the Parousia in any literal form is impossible does the Christian message have any "sure word of prophecy" for the future of society and history? Belief in a real second coming placed an intellectually and dramatically satisfying exclamation point at the end of history. Similarly the social gospel's vision of an ultimate transformation of society within history, under God, gave significance to the total historical process. Each of these views stood in a recognizable relationship to the consistent expectation of the Old and New Testament eschatology. But can the same be said for the current revised versions of the eschatological hope?

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The various existential re-interpretations are meaningful in their stress on the reality of God's presence for judgment and/or forgiveness in each moment of the historical process. But this still leaves unanswered the question Biblical eschatology appeared to answer, namely, does God's will finally triumph on earth? The existential re-interpretations affirm that history is the arena in which man, individually and collectively, decides for or against God. But they do not affirm that history is the arena in which God's purpose is finally manifestly triumphant. It is still possible to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," but it is not possible to affirm that this petition will be granted. Our "human predicament" may require such a restating of the Christian faith. But if so let us not pretend that we have simply translated first century eschatology into the terminology of the twentieth century. We have made a translation, but in the process have, discreetly or indiscreetly, eliminated the final word that appeared in the dominant Biblical tradition.

# Congregational Christians and Social Action

An Appraisal of certain findings of the Board of Review

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[Editor's Note: Lloyd P. Rice, Professor of Economics at Dartmouth College, and sometime economic consultant to the United States Government, served for four years (1948-52) as a member of the Council for Social Action. His observations regarding the findings and recommendations of the Board of Review (appointed by the executive General Council of The Congregational Christian Churches in 1952, "To review all pertinent facts and make recommendations relative to the Council for Social Action") and the validity of their criticisms of C.S.A. procedures and policies relate to activities of the Council during that period, as he observed them personally in operation. On several occasions, particularly in dealing with economic issues, he was severely critical of the quality of research and analysis, of failure to present alternative views or policies or possible programs of action, of what seemed to him hasty and irresponsible action—particularly on several policy statements relating to economic problems. But these protests were largely ineffective in producing desired reforms in procedure. They represented a minority view and were never considered as "prophetic"; nor was any serious attempt made to revamp C.S.A. procedures. The present article grew out of conversations of the writer with the editor and was projected before the Board of Review Report was rendered. Publication of the report has entailed changes in the form of the article, but not in the substantial conclusions, which agree in all essential respects with the findings of the Board of Review; these should be read in conjunction with Professor Rice's appraisal. The views here expressed are those of the author, of course.]

Congregational Christian churches may continue to work collectively as well as individually toward their goal of making "... the Christian Gospel more effective in society. . . ." They may also use as their means the agency which was created by the General Council for that purpose, the Council for Social Action. This is, in brief, the first and most fundamental finding of the Board of Review, a group of representative churchmen who heard the public testimony of both critics and supporters of the C. S. A. The Board's unanimous report deserves careful study and discussions by all groups interested in making the C. S. A. a more responsible and effective agency of the Congregational churches.

The first conclusion is in harmony with the position taken by the 1952 General Council meeting at Claremont. Moreover, this vote in favor of responsible group action refutes the position of a minority within the denomination: that Christian social action should be left entirely to individual Christians.

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The Board of Review specifically held that "the denomination was entirely within its rights in setting up the Council for Social Action and that it had power to do so through the General Council." Furthermore, they said, in view of the denomination's "long history of interest in the social order," they were convinced it "is unwilling today to be indifferent to that order." It seems natural and right, therefore, that they "should have created and should now maintain and control a Council for Social Action."

Critics of the C. S. A. will find little if any comfort in this basic conclusion, nor will other sincere Christians whose view is that the proper business of religion is neither to guide nor to reform society but to save individual souls. It is to be hoped that all such believers in purely individual action will accept the 1952 vote and the finding of the Board of Review as the official Congregational Christian policy, except as it might be changed by some subsequent official action. This does not deny the independence of the local churches nor the responsibility of individual Christians, but it does assert the right and power of Christians to set up an agency which will enable the churches to work together in dealing with social problems.

A supplementary statement of the official Congregational Christian position is to be found in paragraph 10 of "The Christian Basis for Social Action" which was adopted by vote of the General Council in 1952. It reads in part: "The Christian obligation to humanity cannot be discharged simply by the faithful lives of individual Christians and the upright conduct of church affairs. . . . It must include deliberate effort to transform society itself into a community under God. . . . In some situations Christians may achieve objectives effectively by individual effort. In others . . . united action through local and regional committees for social action . . . and denominational . . . agencies, including such specially-created instruments as the Council for Social Action."

The Board of Review held that "With the general intent and form of this charter the Board of Review finds no fault." They agreed with the objectives or goals of the denomination in setting up the C. S. A. and asserted that it had the power to do so. But the Board's major findings also criticized in several respects the procedures and activities of the Council, and recommended significant changes in the "means" by which Congregational Churches should



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move forward toward the goal which had been reaffirmed in 1952 by a majority of about 20 to 1.

The second major finding of the Board of Review concerns primarily the procedures and policies of the C. S. A. as "the agency for helping to make the Christian Gospel more effective in society." In this necessarily brief appraisal the writer would like to single out for consideration four specific criticisms of procedure and policy: (1) lack of responsibility to the denomination and of impartiality toward controversial questions; (2) inadequacies of research; (3) weakness of the educational program; (4) excessive political action. A fifth point, the composition and functioning of the staff also calls for comment.

### I

The first criticism of the Council (as embodied in the second major finding of the Board of Review) says in effect that it has exceeded the authority granted in its charter where it is authorized to act as "an agency of the Congregational Churches," but only as an agency. Its "chief offense," the Board says, "lies in its lack of a sense of responsibility to the denomination." As such, it should "truly represent the diversity of thought within the communion." The General Council, they said, is at fault in not insisting that it do so.

There are several respects in which the Board says C. S. A. has shown this lack of responsibility. Since it is only an "agency" of the denomination, it "cannot divest itself of its official status" even when it specifically states that it speaks "only for itself," as it has been careful to do in recent years when appearing before legislative committees; because as "an agency of the General Council," it "seems to the public to be the spokesman for the denomination."

This position seems clear now to the writer, and he accepts it as both reasonable and definitive. But the contrary position was always assumed, though never discussed in the Council: namely, that the Council of 18 persons could and did speak for itself, and was "not limited to expressing consensus" in the denomination. It was given "freedom to develop a prophetic witness." Unquestionably the view of the Council and members, as was stated in the Stewardship Report, has been that "The C. S. A. is to speak *to* the churches and *for* itself."

The Board of Review says that for a responsible agency this position is untenable and must be changed. This seems a valid conclusion which

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makes clear the restricted authority of C. S. A. to speak on social and economic issues. It cannot continue to appear before Congressional Committees to testify on Point IV, or on the family farm on the assumption that its spokesman is speaking only for the 18 members of the C. S. A., or for a majority of them. C. S. A., therefore, should be made to change and cooperate in making all necessary reforms.

A closely related aspect of acting "responsibly" as an "agency" has to do with presenting the "diversity of thought" within the denomination, and presenting "all essential aspects of every controversial question with which it deals on which Christians may fairly differ."

This is a severe indictment which the writer believes to be true in some instances, having so expressed himself in a letter in 1950: "My suggestion is that we be more careful in living up to our instructions about *research*, and treatment without *bias*—in the sense of facing squarely *all* the biases and differences in views and trying to reconcile them. We can do it. But not in a day or two."

It is essential to be "impartial" in research, education, and action. Although a narrow interpretation of the By-Laws might demand impartiality only in research—a view sometimes expressed by staff members—the writer is convinced (as the Board seems to infer) that it is quite as important to the churches to insist also upon impartiality at the education and action stages. This means presenting *all* major viewpoints on an issue, especially by staff members to the Council, before choice is made by the Council; and later by the C. S. A. to the churches and the public. In some instances diversity of viewpoints among Christians was fully brought out and discussed before action was taken by the C. S. A. On the issue of world order some sincere Christians would rely solely on the United Nations; others are firmly convinced that we should strive for World Government now, as the only effective means; while yet others would have the United States go it alone. The policy statement of February 1950 on the United Nations was a compromise threshed out after listening to a diversity of views as to appropriate "means" or feasible next steps. Similar care seemed lacking in presentation of possible "means" of meeting agricultural and industrial issues, although there appeared to be general agreement as to the seven "guiding objectives" or goals of agricultural policy and the eight "goals of good industrial relations," both of which were adopted in February 1950. Divergence in views as to "means" should also have been presented as impartially by staff to

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Council and by Council to the churches as might be expected in the best type of educational institution. Is it possible that over-concern for a "prophetic witness" may lead to action which implies that there is only one Christian "means" of moving towards one's goal, only one true prophet?

A final aspect of the charge that the Council has often forgotten to be impartial in its activities is that "its literature has sometimes been definitely slanted. . . ." The treatment of Point IV in *Social Action* seems to illustrate most excellently a fair representation of diversity of views, of complexities and of means. But with reference to the original version of another issue, the writer's judgment in 1951 was stated as follows:

"The clear implication and main thesis of the entire article seems to me to be that a political bias of the Left (more government intervention) is somehow . . . Christian, while comparable political bias of the Right (opposed to government intervention in economic and social affairs) is somehow un-Christian or pagan. I find no justification in economics, political science, ethics or Christianity for any such conclusion. It is a matter of personal opinion and political philosophy which varies with persons, times, and places."

## II

The second criticism deals with inadequacies in "research."

Research should be competent as well as impartial; but it is unlikely to be satisfactory in fields calling for technical knowledge and experienced judgment in interpretation—say, as to economic problems—so long as the staff is composed exclusively of persons trained in theology. Such persons, as the writer pointed out in a letter in 1950, are "eminently qualified to handle religious and ethical problems, but are about 'as at home' in dealing with economic problems as an economist would be in settling religious-ethical issues. The situation is not too bad provided the deficiency or lack of balance in the 'staff' and their views is clearly recognized."

But even so, as the findings of the Board of Review bear out, and as the writer stated in correspondence in 1951, much more could have been done to utilize first-class research carried on by other qualified agencies. He then said: "To remedy inadequacies in dealing with economic issues" we must first use "more of the already available

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research done by competent secular or religious organizations. All the C. E. D. publications I've seen have been excellent, competent and unbiased. Information Service of National Council rates 'tops' in summarizing research and presenting useful summaries of books and articles."

This criticism should not be interpreted as applying to most aspects of international problems, where full use was generally made of research, and conflicting viewpoints were generally brought out. And some research was originated by staff members in dealing with problems of migratory labor in agriculture and with race relations. But, "My criticism is that the staff has neither sufficiently sought nor accepted, in economic matters, the competent, expert, balanced advice so necessary for full comprehension, adequate 'education' of staff or Council, or for a sound basis for applying the 'Christian view of life.'"

### III

The educational program of the Council was criticized as weak. This deficiency is recognized by the Council and a strong attempt is now being made to make it more effective in the local churches and state conferences. But it is not an easy job. Although education is a "slow task" and perhaps "full of frustrations," as the Board's report says, that does not justify turning to "political action." Yes, as a responsible agency of the churches, one must admit that "the main function of the Council—is to speak *to* the churches rather than *for* them."

### IV

Finally, the board criticized CSA for too much "action." It is the agency "for helping to make the Christian Gospel more effective . . . through . . . action." But such action is authorized only "on occasion." "It was not supposed by the founders . . . that this would become the regular practice." That is, it was not expected that policy statements or advocacy of political action would become frequent. By implication these activities of CSA have in the view of the Board, become too numerous to be interpreted as "on occasion."

The criticism has some validity although it should not be interpreted to suggest abolishing the work of our Washington office, since lobbying activities, so called, were only a small part of the work of that office. The major part of the work there was very valuable



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to the denomination and consisted of gathering first hand materials as a basis of educational work, of seminars, of coordinating CSA work with other church bodies, or at times of creating new organs. The fundamental difficulty lay in the adoption by CSA of too many policy statements. Yet, as the writer commented during his tenure on the CSA, "some of us were working to cut down the number of such statements by 50-75% while improving the quality of research behind them." Authority to intercede "on occasion" cannot reasonably be interpreted as justifying ten or more statements on agriculture, land tenure and the family farm. So "a second price we must pay for better quality is to devote more time to education in the Council and issue fewer statements."

But the Board also said: "When, however, the Council is sure of substantial unanimity in the denomination as to the Christian course in any political area, the Council . . . is the agency . . . to express their mind for them." How is substantial unanimity to be determined? The report does not say. But the principle is sound and should not prove to be an insuperable obstacle, provided it is interpreted with reasonable liberality and is not used as a device for preventing group action. For example, a vote of 20 to 1 by the General Council on any proposal, such as support for and improvement of the United Nations, or on the principle of technical assistance to underdeveloped areas; or support by equal majorities in a substantial sample of churches and Social Action Committees, might fairly be interpreted as a reasonable index of being "substantially united."

To develop such indices is a challenge which must be met. It should neither be used as a device to prevent all group action, nor as a reason for refusing to accept the principles as a means of making the Council truly responsible to the churches. It is hard to avoid the conclusion drawn by the Board of Review that if the Council for Social Action is to be made a truly *responsible agency* of the Congregational Christian churches, it "should not take a partisan position on matters on which the churches are not substantially united." The verdict must be accepted.

### V

One final aspect which might be overlooked by many persons but which is vital to implementing the recommendations of the Board relates to the strategic position of the "staff" in the work of the

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Council, including their responsibility for its activities, standards, and reputation. It is important to recognize, therefore, the Board's concern for ensuring that the changes which they expect to be effected be carried out in good faith by a staff whose personnel is wholly sympathetic with the findings and recommendations of the Board. Unless this is ensured, the future conduct of the Council's work may not be fully in harmony with the recommendations of the Report.

This view is stated judiciously but with restraint in the body of the Board's report, but it is made utterly clear in two letters which accompany the report. One member recommends that "CSA engage new personnel known to be wholly and undividedly sympathetic to the proposed changes." The other states more explicitly than the report what is perhaps the predominant attitude of members of the Board with reference to responsibility of the staff for past activities and criticisms of the Council. It may not be "sufficiently plain," he says, that the Board "agrees on need for drastic reforms in the council's work. The report says in substance that the Council for Social Action as an institution has a proper place within our denominational life, but that the manner in which *the staff* [italics added] has conducted the work of the Council justifies the essential criticisms that have been made." Continuing, he writes: "I concur . . . that it is not the charter . . . which needs revision, but the interpretation given to the charter by *the staff* . . . an interpretation so slanted that the purpose of the Council has often been scarcely recognizable in the activities of recent years."

If the Council is to move forward to a new era, as it surely must, this delicate problem of the staff and of ensuring that it will be composed of sympathetic laymen as well as ministers cannot be dodged. It should be not an insuperable obstacle, but it must be faced resolutely.

## VI

What then should be the attitude of the Council and of its critics toward this judicious and official report upon the activities of the Council for Social Action? Critics and others who are inclined to believe in individual action *only* would prefer to ignore that part of the report which concludes that the General Council had power to set up such an agency, that its purpose and form was sound, and that its appropriate activities should be more adequately financed by the

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churches and not left to individual support. They would prefer to stress those parts of the report which criticise the procedures and propose restrictions on the policy-making and lobbying activities of C.S.A.

Council members and staff would prefer to call attention only to those aspects which hold that it is right and legal for Congregational Christians to set up such an agency, and that it deserves more adequate financial support from church benevolence giving and better pay for its staff.

But unless both groups accept willingly and without reservation *all* of the findings of the distinguished Board of Review, the future of the Council and the adequacy of its financial support will be uncertain. Unless the errors of the past are corrected in good faith the Council cannot hope to become the "prophetic witness" for the denomination which the preponderant majority hopes will make the Christian Gospel more effective in society.

The only sound policy, therefore, for the denomination appears to be to *insist upon* carrying out *in toto* the unanimous recommendations of the Board of Review, which call for no changes in the charter, or in the goals of the denomination, but do call for "drastic reforms in the conduct of the Council's work."

This is the challenge of the hour. It calls for appropriate, effective, and *responsible* action, not only by the Council for Social Action, but also by the Executive Committee of the General Council; and for soul-searching by members of the staff. Stress upon the need for greater *responsibility* of Council and staff to the churches, and for responsible action in effecting the changes recommended by the Board of Review, reminds one of the change made in the wording by the Commission on "The Christian Basis for Social Action" between the date of the draft statement, submitted for study in March 1952, and that of the "short form" adopted by the General Council in June 1952. In the original form the word "responsible" does not appear: Christians are admonished only to "act resolutely and sacrificially." But in the form in which it was finally adopted the word "*responsibly*" is significantly added, so that it reads: "In a time of confusion and indecision, those who bear the name of Christ must act responsibly, resolutely, and sacrificially. They act in obedience and love of their Lord." In these words is stated the continuing task of the Council For Social Action.

# United Board for Christian Colleges In China Progress Report of the Literature Program

(September 30, 1952-November 15, 1953)

Today social changes of a far-reaching nature are taking place in Southeast Asia. In some areas they have taken the form of violence; in others the threat of violence exists; and in still others conditions of unrest are brewing. Only in a few is there tranquility. In all Southeast Asia the peoples are groping for some form of social order to anchor their ships of state.

In this strategic area of the world a basic conflict of two systems of values is taking place, a conflict between the purely material on the one hand and the primarily spiritual on the other. This struggle for men's hearts and minds may well be measured in terms of years. Its outcome in Southeast Asia is of vital importance to the whole social order of Asia and to the peace of the world.

The United Board for Christian Colleges in China is contributing its services in a modest but vital way to this critical struggle by its sponsorship of the Literature Program. The objective of this Program is the preparation and putting into Chinese of significant statements dealing with such great issues that face mankind today. It operates in the educational and social area lying between the militantly political on the one hand and the primarily theological on the other. The audience the Program tries to reach is the 22,000,000 Chinese, the great majority of whom have chosen Southeast Asia as their home.

It is a little over a year now since the Program was launched on September 30, 1952 at the United Board's headquarters in New York. During a series of meetings, the members (Dr. M. Searle Bates, Dr. E. E. Barnett, Dr. William P. Fenn) of the Sub-Committee of the Literature Program and the members (Dr. Ku Tun-jou, Dr. Martin Yang, Dr. Frederick Hung, Dr. Wu Teh-yao) of the



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Working Group, together mapped out procedures and programs for immediate action. The members of the Working Group, upon their return to their headquarters on the Hartford Seminary Foundation Campus, immediately settled down to tackle the tasks that lay ahead. During the first few weeks, extensive reading into current literature concerning Southeast Asia was done by the members and information concerning publications of the area was gathered. In October the "joint manifesto," *Our Twentieth Century*, on Christian and democratic values, was completed. By November an average of two articles (from 2,500 to 5,000 Chinese characters) per week was produced.

Even while the first articles were being prepared, negotiations were carried out with editors and publishers of newspapers and magazines in Taiwan, Malaya, and Singapore. The letters were drafted in the form that could be used as press releases. In the letters were explained the scope and purpose of the Literature Program of the United Board and cooperation was solicited.

Early in December 1952, encouraging replies were received from leading newspapers and magazines from Taiwan, the Federation of Malaya and Singapore. More encouraging was the fact that these papers also were willing to offer remuneration for the articles published. Even more encouraging from the point of good will was the news received from the "mosquito papers" of sometimes one page, sometimes two, which would publish the articles by installments.

It was December 15, 1952 that the first series of articles was unceremoniously despatched. It can now be reported that the articles of the Literature Program have been accepted by magazines and newspapers in Taiwan, Malaya, Singapore, Hong Kong, Burma, North Borneo, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Sarawak, Cambodia and Vietnam. It can also be reported that the United Board for Christian Colleges in China is being rewarded in monetary terms, as the result of this enterprise. Today the United Board has five bank accounts to its credit, one in the Federation of Malaya, one in Singapore, one in Hong Kong and two in Taiwan.

Altogether eighty-four articles, two press releases and one translation of a hymn of an aggregate total of approximately 350,000 Chinese characters have been produced by the Working Group since it embarked on its task on September 30, 1952. To date eighty articles

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with identical and sometimes modified versions, together with the hymn and press releases have been sent out to the twelve territories in Southeast Asia. All these have been published, some in two places, some in three, four or even five different places. This makes 100 per cent acceptance.

Many of the first articles have appeared in special issues. The 1952 New Year issue of the *Nanyang Siang Pau* in Singapore (reputed to be the leading independent Chinese daily in Southeast Asia) was largely a "United Board Issue." *Our Twentieth Century*, the joint manifesto of Christian and democratic ideals, occupied the front page. On the other pages there were five articles by the members of the Working Group. Thirty-three of the eighty articles have appeared as editorials for Sunday editions of several leading newspapers in Southeast Asia.

It can also be reported that the ideas contained in many of the articles have been seen to be quoted, expanded and even developed upon by local readers and newspaper editors. Some enthusiastic readers even made sure with the newspaper editors that their comments be transmitted to the authors concerned.

# Abstracts of Doctoral Theses Accepted 1952-1953

## MARTIN HEIDEGGER'S FUNDAMENTAL ONTOLOGY AND ITS THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

JOHANNES FRIEDRICH SIEGMUND HANSELMANN [Ph.D.]

The present study is not a review of Heidegger's works, nor is it a translation of them. Rather it is an interpretation attempted by way of a synopsis of his thinking as set forth in his publication up to the present. As an interpretation and as a synopsis it involves a selective principle and, to be sure, the translation of several passages, for both of which the present writer is responsible.

Chapter I will give a general introduction to Heidegger. Chapters II-VII will deal with Heidegger's thinking under various chief aspects. Chapter VIII, finally, will present a critical study of Heidegger in relationship to theology. Though a number of footnotes refer to comparisons with other thinkers, this presentation is not intended to be a comparative study. For a comparison is only possible if a foundation has been laid first of all, on the basis of which one can compare the thinking of one philosopher with that of another.

This study is the first attempt to present Heidegger's thinking in a synoptic and systematic fashion to the English-speaking world. The text of this study of Heidegger's thinking is solely based on primary sources. In interpreting Heidegger, it is the main concern of the present writer to be faithful to the subject, and not to be distracted by secondary source opinions. Those are referred to in footnotes. . . .

The thinking of Martin Heidegger, one of the "most creative philosophers" (Berdyayev) is more than a thought-construction *in abstracto*. Heidegger's emphasis stems from the situation of man of the twentieth century. Heidegger's thinking is in its deepest sense a revolt against modern subjectivism which enthrones man as master with unlimited possibilities and power over everything that exists. It is a protest against the process of objectification in which everything, even the fellowman, is degraded to a mere thing. It is a warning against the absolutization of the age of the machine in which man loses his intrinsic value. It is also an attack upon western rationalism which considers itself capable of solving every problem by means of the *ratio*. It is an objection to traditional ontology to which the

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quest for Being had become irrelevant, and to traditional metaphysics which replaces Being by an Existent. It is a rejection of dogmatism in favor of a living and searching relationship to Being. It is also characteristic of modern man's crying for an unshakable basis in the threat and insecurity of the present era. Yet it remains stuck in the realm of philosophical thinking. Hence, though this thinking has much to say to modern man, theology cannot regard Heidegger as the ultimate remedy for the sickness from which millions of uprooted people suffer. Theology, if it wants to be faithful to its cause, will have to proclaim ever and ever anew that there is only one redeeming power for man: namely, absolute faith in the love of God, who has given His son, Christ crucified and risen, to redeem mankind and to grant access to salvation. In so doing, theology fulfils its essential task and preserves its "more" in comparison with philosophy.

### CONCILIARISM IN THEORY AND PRACTICE 1378-1418

JAMES KERR CAMERON [Ph.D. *Summa cum laude*]

In the fateful period of the Great Western Schism, the earlier conciliar teaching of John of Paris, Marsilius of Padua, and William of Ockham was revived and an attempt made to have the doctrine of conciliar supremacy incorporated in the law of the Church. The gradual emergence of the proposal to hold a council to settle the dispute over the election of Urban VI, first in the suggestions of the Italian Cardinals and the Archbishop of Toledo, and then in the writings of the two leading German scholars at the University of Paris, Henry of Langenstein and Conrad of Gelnhausen, is fully discussed together with the arguments set forth in opposition to it by the leading canonist supporters of Clement VII and his College of Cardinals. It is pointed out that the theory advocated by the Paris doctors and at this time accepted by the entire University is simply that of William of Ockham.

During the years 1383-1408 the proposal to summon a general council suffered a severe set-back. The way favored by the University of Paris and adopted by the government of France was that both contenders for the papacy should resign voluntarily or be compelled to resign in order that a new election might be carried out and one undoubted pope be secured. Despite the efforts of the royal princes to win over the reluctant Benedict XIII, and their complete failure to



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secure effective assistance from the leading countries of the Roman Obedience for the carrying out of this policy against Urban's successors, this course was maintained from 1394 onward, even to the length of withdrawing obedience from the pope and besieging him in the papal palace at Avignon. Benedict, a stout upholder of the doctrine of papal absolutism, strongly opposed all attempts of the French government to dominate the Church and succeeded at length in coming to an agreement with his rival, Gregory XII, whereby the two contenders were to meet at Savona and, without secular interference, settle the Church dispute.

The inability of the two to fulfil their agreement brought about a revolution in both Colleges of Cardinals which eventuated in the summoning of the Council of Pisa for 1409. Although conciliarism had been abandoned as a practical policy it still continued during these years to have its advocates, particularly in England, which, however, produced no great conciliar theorist. In France, on the other hand, new leaders had arisen in Peter d'Ailly and John Gerson who were completely imbued with the conciliar idea. The legal architects of the Council of Pisa were, nevertheless, canonists of Bologna, such as Peter de Ancorano and Francesca Zabarella.

In the course of the discussion of the Council of Pisa, the writer considers in detail the various documents published in defense of the action of the cardinals and also subjects to critical examination the theory on which the Pisan fathers built their council and deposed the two rival popes.

The Council of Pisa, relying upon the generally admitted teaching of the canonists that a pope could be deposed for heresy, sought only to prove that the Schism had led to heresy on the part of the popes. It did not seek either to limit the power of the pope or the set up means whereby regular general councils would become part of the normal life of the Church. It did, however, act on the underlying theory of conciliar supremacy.

Because of the undue haste with which the Council arrived at its decisions, it had succeeded only in electing yet another rival pontiff. Conciliarism did not thereby suffer any set-back. During the period between the end of the Council of Pisa and the beginning of the Council of Constance the most active conciliar publicist was the *curialis*, Dietrich of Niem. In his treatise *De modis uniendi ac reformandi ecclesiae*, (one of the documents translated in vol. 2 of this thesis) in which he reproduced much of the teaching of Marsilius of Padua, tempered only by that of Gervasius of Tilbury, he advocated the summoning of a general council by the emperor or the king

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of the Romans, and the deposition of John XXIII.

The Council of Constance, brought about initially by Sigismund, Emperor-elect, in seeking to unite the Church under one undoubted pope, also sought to substitute for the papal monarchism of the Middle Ages a modified constitutionalism. It boldly stated the doctrine of conciliar supremacy in the decrees of its fifth general session and acted upon them in deposing John XXIII. However, it defeated its own ultimate aims by allowing Gregory XII to resummon the Council before accepting his resignation. In the opinion of the writer this is one of the great mistakes of the Council, which reveals how much the members were impelled by expediency and how little captivated by conciliar principles. The Council, although succeeding in fixing the manner of the election of the new pope after the deposition of Benedict, again erred in accepting as pope a member of the College of Cardinals who was not of the reform party and who could be expected, as soon as opportunity offered itself, to re-assert the traditional papal claims. By the system of concordats all effective means of accomplishing a moral reformation were taken out of the hands of the Council. By these papal agreements with the national kingdoms and churches the corporate sense of Christendom and of the Church, which the conciliarists had done so much to foster, was greatly weakened and the way prepared for the nationalistic tendencies of the Reformation.

The conciliarism of the period of Schism, reaching its fullest development at the Council of Constance, was but the outcome of a process of self-examination which the Schism had forced upon the Church. Basically the movement which culminated in the decrees *Sacrosancta* and *Frequens* was not merely a war between rival claimants for the papal chair, but a war of ideas; a war between two opposing systems of government; a war between the new constitutionalism and the old absolutism. As a new form of Church government, conciliarism did not, however, win the minds of the churchmen. It was supported not for what it was but for what it might accomplish.

As an attempt to reform the Church from within, the Council proves the impossibility of such a task without a deeper questioning of the basis of the medieval Church in the light of the primitive Church of the New Testament and the early fathers. The conciliar theorists, while ascribing the supreme authority in the Church to a representative general assembly, and although emphasizing the fact that the Church was a *corpus mysticum*, whose supreme and only infallible head was the risen Christ, maintained the necessity for

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outward unity under one vicar of Christ. In the end, the twin problems of reformation and unity, because they were thought of merely in outward, formal terms, were left unsolved.

Throughout this study the writer has, in all but a few instances based his discussion of conciliarism on a first-hand knowledge of the relevant contemporary published documents. The undermentioned documents, as representative of the various stages in the development of the theory and of the teaching of the leading conciliarists, have been translated, forming the second part of the work.

The works translated are:

Henry of Langenstein, *Epistola concilii pacis*;

John Gerson, *De unitate ecclesiastica*; and *De potestate ecclesiastica et origine iuris et legum*;

Peter d'Ailly, *Tractatus de reformatione ecclesiae*.

Dietrich of Niem, *De modis uniendi ac reformandi ecclesiae*.

There is an appendix in which the writer points out the full extent of the dependence of Peter d'Ailly in his *Tractatus de reformatione ecclesiae* upon chapters XVI—XIX of Henry of Langenstein's *Epistola concilii pacis*.

## JONATHAN EDWARDS THE YOUNGER:

### A BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

WESLEY C. EWERT [Th.D.]

Jonathan Edwards Jr. was born May 26, 1745 at Northampton, Mass. When his renowned father was dismissed from the Northampton parish, the family moved to the frontier village of Stockbridge, Mass. Here the young son experienced the rigors of frontier life, living with Indians in the wilderness of New York and Pennsylvania, learning their language and ways, that later, as was his father's wish, he might serve as a missionary among them.

When the elder Edwards accepted the presidency of the College of New Jersey, the family in due time moved to Princeton. Here Jonathan Edwards Jr. remained, until he was graduated from the college in 1765.

His theological education was continued in Massachusetts and Connecticut with Doctors Hopkins and Bellamy, both ardent New Divinity men, who had been students in the parsonage of the elder Edwards. Religion for them was a matter of a renewed heart, of an entirely new disposition, an absolutely free and unmerited gift from God.

## *Jonathan Edwards the Younger: A Biographical Essay*

From the study of Divinity he went early in 1767 to accept a tutorship at Princeton. While at Princeton he preached in surrounding churches and oftentimes to the congregation in the White Haven Society in New Haven, Connecticut. He was ordained to the ministry in this society and served here until May 1795.

His ministry in New Haven was begun in the midst of difficulties. Trouble with Great Britain was rife and the Revolutionary War with its generally deadening effect upon matters spiritual was soon to break upon the colonies. His congregation likewise was early divided through doctrinal strife. Edwards would under no circumstances countenance the "halfway" covenant in the church. But the trend toward doctrinal leniency was abroad in the land: the White Haven Congregation divided, and another society was formed with the name of Fair Haven.

The sermons preached to the White Haven Congregation were heavy with the hard sayings of the New Divinity. God's sovereignty, his decrees, man's moral depravity and utter need for renewal were favorite themes. Lack of church attendance called forth sharp words of correction and funeral sermons without fail bade the mourners rejoice, for what God does is right.

In the wider fellowship Edwards exerted considerable influence. He was often called upon as a guest preacher. After the war was concluded his efforts were evident in the consociation of churches about New Haven and the General Association of Connecticut. He served on the committee for the superintendency of missionary work in the new settlements in New York, Pennsylvania and Vermont. He was one of the committee of three to draw up the plan for the Missionary Society of Connecticut, 1798.

In the negotiations with the Presbyterian Church of America, which finally culminated in the "Plan of Union," Edwards was a prime mover; and the adopted plan in 1801 is considered to have been, in large measure, his creation. He was an ardent exponent of missionary work, convinced that all who did not hear the gospel were doomed to be banished from the presence of God in the world to come.

While pastor of the White Haven Church in New Haven he maintained an intimate relationship with Yale College, preaching often in the chapel, and many times sitting with the board of examiners. Yale graduates came to him for instruction in Divinity, and for this instruction Edwards prepared 313 questions and answers, which in a succinct manner covered the theological discipline. He was frequently called upon to deliver ordination sermons. These sermons reveal his conception of the Christian ministry and throw light upon his



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character as a minister.

The events of the day likewise received his bold and penetrating attention. He was a whig politically, and took a resolute stand for the colonies in the Revolutionary War. He exerted himself in speaking for the welfare of the new Republic, and made clear his understanding of what constituted enduring government.

He spoke against the slave traffic and called for the immediate freeing of all men in bondage. He looked upon the black people as brothers and as heirs of redemption upon the same footing as the more favored white man. He attacked the liquor evil in a day when rum was cheap and drunkenness a common thing. He pleaded for the payment of just debts on the part of all people, together with a strict adherence to truth. His hard doctrines were not popular in his congregation; and this fact, coupled with other circumstances led to his dismissal from New Haven in 1795.

He was called to serve the church in Colebrook, Connecticut, settling there in December 1795. Here, in semi-retirement, he wished to spend his days, preaching, writing, superintending his farm, and being with a host of congenial friends. His sermons were appreciated in Colebrook, and rare affection grew between pastor and people. In the midst of his new-found joys he was called in 1799 to the presidency of Union College, Schenectady, N. Y.

His presidency of Union College was but for two years, but they were crowned with success. He died of a fever on August 1, 1801.

With the Edwardeans in general, Edwards took his stand on divine revelation as being the necessary avenue for the disclosure of God's moral attributes. Only in revelation was redemption made known. His conflict with the Deists was sharp and unrelenting, for the Deists maintained that the light of reason or light of nature was sufficient to know the will of God.

The atonement, Edwards maintained, was a capital doctrine revealed in the Scriptures and quite beyond the comprehension of unaided natural reason. Revelation showed man how he was totally corrupted in his moral being, and revelation alone disclosed how a man could be saved from his natural condition. Christ, in his death on the cross upheld the honor of God's law, the law which natural man broke. Christ, in maintaining the honor of the law, opened a way through which God in sovereign mercy could offer salvation to such as he chose to save. This theory of the atonement, stemming in part from Hugo Grotius and reaching its prime expression in the younger Edwards, became known as the Governmental Theory and subsequently as The New England Theory of the Atonement.

## *Jonathan Edwards the Younger: A Biographical Essay*

Eschatology was a favorite theme of Edwards. Against the teaching of the universal restitution of all men to communion with God as advocated by the Universalists, Edwards championed the teaching of eternal punishment as the just desert of all who died impenitent. The general good of the universe could be served as well through just punishment in the world to come, as just punishment serves the good of society in this world.

Finally, God is under obligation to save no man, and such as are saved are saved only through the sovereign mercy of God. Yet Edwards insisted that a man has a duty to seek the forgiving grace of God, thus saving his system from the odium of fatalism. He sought in his theology to be like his father, and in large measure he succeeded. In the conflict with Deism and Universalism, and in his statement on the Atonement he exhibited an originality which easily gained for him leadership among the New Divinity theologians. As a defender of the Calvinistic systems in the late eighteenth century, there was probably none more able than the younger Edwards. Sources used in the writing of the thesis include unpublished sermons, letters, and other manuscript material, together with the published works of Jonathan Edwards the Younger. A detailed list of MSS with their location is provided.

# Church in Communist Society

A Study in J. L. Hromádka's  
Theological Politics

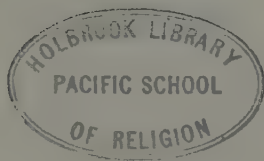
By

MATTHEW SPINKA

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The Hartford Theological Seminary

Introduction by Reinhold Niebuhr



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## Introduction

Professor Spinka has rendered a service to the ecumenical Church in documenting the history of Professor Hromádka's relation to communism. This history is the more important because though a viewpoint naturally informs it, it is not in any sense polemical. Hromádka, who stood resolutely against Nazism, has subsequently more than flirted with communism. It is not our business to judge the motives of men, for actions and attitudes come out of a curious mixture of motives which in the ultimate instance no one can justly appraise. But Hromádka's influence in the Ecumenical Movement on the one hand, and his relationship to communism on the other, make it important to have the kind of complete history of his pilgrimage which Professor Spinka has given us.

*Reinhold Niebuhr*

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## Chapter I: The Early Years

The author of the recently published book, *The Captive Mind*, the former Polish communist, Czesław Miłosz, depicts with penetrating insight and almost uncanny understanding the process by which the educated and intelligent men whose case histories are dealt with in the book, are either convinced of the communist ideology or brought over to it. The divergent motives which actuate them, whether they be intellectual or emotional, matters of honest conviction or of calculating opportunism, are portrayed with such clairvoyant and intuitive insight and such intimate knowledge of the persons concerned, that the book, in my judgment, far excels similar and more popular attempts to explain the baffling phenomenon.

The intellectual whom I propose as a subject of study is not a communist in the party sense of the word, nor does he accept all the official dogmas of the Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist ideology. He is an outstanding Christian theologian, an honest, earnest, and loyal member of the Church, a man devoted to the cause of Christianity. But he has convinced himself, by a process extending over his entire adult life, that liberal democracy is a lost cause, that communism is the divinely-ordained "wave of the future," and that the Christian churches must accept the new order if they are to survive. He furthermore believes that the churches must voluntarily undertake a radical reconstruction "from the ground up," for they must ultimately serve as the moral and religious foundations of the "classless society."

The man of whom I write is Joseph L. Hromádka, professor and at various times dean of the Comenius Protestant Theological Faculty of Prague, Czechoslovakia. He has been recognized the world over as the principal Protestant defender of communism, and as such does not speak only for those Protestants in the communist-dominated countries who share his views, but for like-minded individual Protestants anywhere. His utterances, accepted by a considerable number of Protestants as an authentic and authoritative expression of the mind of the churches behind the "Iron Curtain," pass for prophetic utterances—almost oracles—regarding the future course of the Christian churches. As such, he assumes a significance far beyond that of his own individual views, and beyond the confines of his own church or country. The problem he raises is of primary and crucial importance to world Christianity: is communism the irresistible force destined to conquer the

world, and must we Christians rethink the position of the church in view of this future—or perhaps present—crisis? Hence, it is essential that Hromádka's thought be carefully analysed and critically evaluated. It is in the spirit of a fair, unbiased, and objective inquiry into his intellectual and theological development that this study of his religious and politico-sociological opinions is undertaken.

I am extremely anxious—although not too hopeful—to avoid any misunderstanding of my motives. This is no attack upon Dr. Hromádka as a Christian or a theologian. I wish that this study could have been written in a wholly impersonal style, without involving Dr. Hromádka at all. But such a study would have been ineffective. His views are influential just because they are incarnated in his virile, exceedingly forceful personality. Hence, they cannot be separated from him.

Moreover, I freely admit that Dr. Hromádka is not as uncritical of communism as are the other two outstanding Christian leaders in the communist-dominated countries, Bishop Albert Bereczky of the Hungarian Reformed Church and Y. T. Wu of China. Nor am I unwilling to acknowledge that Dr. Hromádka's experiment in cooperating with the Czechoslovak and other communist regimes is not without its positive value: for had he not made it, no one could tell whether this was a possible solution of the acute problem of the relation of the Christian churches to communism. Now we know that it is not.

Joseph Hromádka (for the initial L. was adopted by him only after his marriage with Miss Náda Lukl) was born in the village of Hodslavice in Moravia on June 8, 1889. His father was a well-to-do farmer, the village elder, and an honored presbyter of the local Lutheran congregation. On his mother's side he traced his ancestry to the Palacký family, for generations resident in Hodslavice, of which František Palacký (1798–1876), the official historiographer of the Kingdom of Bohemia, and the author of the famous and still basically important *History of the Czech Nation*, was the most illustrious member. Young Joseph studied in the gymnasium at Valašské Meziříčí, where he became acquainted not only with the other officially-recognized Protestant Church in the Austro-Hungarian monarchy—the Reformed—but also with the essentially anti-religious, secularist culture which predominated among the educated classes. It was most likely at this Moravian town that he first heard T. G. Masaryk, then Professor of Philosophy at the University of Prague and a candidate for a seat in the Austrian Parliament, for the latter was at the time conducting his election campaign in this district. Young

Hromádka at first intended to study philosophy, but a friend of his, a theological student, persuaded him to choose the ministry as his life work.

Accordingly, in 1908, Hromádka was matriculated as a student in the Protestant Theological Faculty of Vienna, for at the time no such Czech institution existed in Prague. He studied under Professors Knopf, Beth, and Skalský. Of the latter, who became one of the founding members of the John Hus Protestant Theological Faculty in Prague (1919) and Hromádka's elder colleague, Hromádka wrote that he "had no influence upon us [students]."<sup>1</sup> After a year of study in Vienna, Hromádka went for two semesters to Basle, where he studied under Wernle. His third year of theology he took at the University of Heidelberg, where he came under the powerful influence of Johannes Weiss, Ernest Troeltsch, and the neo-Kantian philosopher W. Windelband. He tells us that his interests at the time were altogether intellectual: he wanted to find out whether modern man, educated in modern philosophy and natural sciences, could still remain essentially religious.<sup>2</sup> Having been trained in a liberal theological world-view, his own earliest convictions were understandably dominated by the conclusions currently held by liberal leaders. His maiden literary effort, an article written during his student years, was a defense of the German liberal pastor, Karl Jatho, who had been "defrocked" on account of his presumably unorthodox views. But looking back upon this period forty-two years later, Hromádka declared—undoubtedly sincerely—that liberal theology had failed, even in his student days, to satisfy him, and that even then he had come to the conclusion that "the message of the Scripture about the Word and deeds of God went beyond the merely relativistic explanations which his teachers had held and taught."<sup>3</sup> If so, there is nothing in his earliest writings to indicate it.

Upon completing his three years of theological preparation, he was offered an opportunity to study abroad. He promptly accepted it and went for a semester to Scotland where he entered the United Free College at Aberdeen. Among his fellow-students was John Mackay, who became the president of the Princeton Theological Seminary, where Hromádka was to teach during his stay in this country. When at last he returned home from abroad, he was ordained, and became the vicar of the Moravian Lutheran congregation of Vsetín. He likewise entered upon his journalistic activity by contributing occasional articles to a church periodical—a practice which he has continued ever since, and which became his chief literary form of expression.

For he has been predominantly a religious journalist. He likewise exhibited a lively interest in social conditions and their religious solution, an interest awakened in him by the work of the Scottish Salvation Army.

But desiring to continue his post-graduate studies at the University of Prague, Hromádka secured, early in 1916, an appointment as the vicar in the largest Lutheran congregation in Prague, the Salvátor Church, of which Dr. Ferdinand Hrejsa was pastor. Since he thus retained his ministerial status, he was not subject to military service during the war period. Hromádka at the same time studied philosophy and Russian subjects with the view of securing the doctoral degree. But even then he gave promise of becoming a "stormy petrel" in his church by his critical attitude toward Lutheranism, which earned him a rebuke from his superintendent, Dr. F. Trnka. The latter warned him that such a course might result in the loss of his ministerial employment. However, his pastor, Dr. Hrejsa, a man of a sweet and conciliatory disposition, who became the Lutheran superintendent in 1917 after Trnka's death (although he was not confirmed by the government until the next year), kept a protecting hand over him. Nevertheless, Hromádka's growing dissatisfaction with the inadequate stress on social problems on the part of the Lutherans prompted him to seek satisfaction in the tradition of the ancient Unity of Czech Brethren which emphasized disciplined Christian life rather than mere orthodox belief. It likewise made him an enthusiastic supporter of the current movement for the unification of the two principal Protestant communions in the country—the Reformed and the Lutheran—which resulted, after the establishment of the independent Czechoslovak Republic (October 28, 1918), in the creation, on December 17 and 18 of that year, of the Evangelical Church of Czech Brethren. The Constituent Council, representing the churches of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, approved the union with enthusiasm. Hromádka was, of course, too young to exert any very considerable influence in this unionist movement: the chief figures in it were the Lutheran superintendent, Ferdinand Hrejsa, and the Reformed senior, Joseph Souček, along with the Moravian Reformed superintendent, Ferdinand Císař. Dr. Souček became the first synodical senior of the newly organized Czech Brethren Church.

Hromádka's theological thinking during this earliest Prague period developed quite definitely in an anti-liberal direction. In 1916 he publicly avowed his dissatisfaction with the liberal theology when he delivered an address, in which he contrasted the old orthodoxy with

modern liberalism, and found the latter deficient in practical piety as well as in true doctrine. Although as yet he had not evolved any satisfactory substitute for liberalism, he entered into a lively controversy with J. B. Kozák, then the vicar of the Reformed Church in Kolín, and later professor of philosophy at the Charles University of Prague, who was a radical exponent of liberal theology; rejecting divine revelation, the deity of Christ, and therefore the trinitarian symbol.<sup>4</sup>

This development of Hromádka's theological thought away from liberalism was furthered during his brief period of service, toward the end of the War, as an Austrian army chaplain (March to November, 1918). His appointment was ordered by the government against Dr. Hrejsa's protests, for he wanted Hromádka to serve as an assistant superintendent. Nevertheless, Hromádka was sent to an army post in Bukowina and Galicia. In constant contact with suffering and death, he "was clearly conscious of the religious weakness and rational inadequacy of his theology."<sup>5</sup> Moreover, his army experience gave him an opportunity to become acquainted with war prisoners returning, in accordance with the provision of the Brest-Litovsk peace terms, from the Soviet war-camps. Many of these men had been indoctrinated with communist propaganda during their captivity; hence, they were favorably inclined toward the Bolsheviks. Hromádka thus gained a glimpse of the new order in the Soviet Federation, and has since that time, during three definite periods of his subsequent career, adopted in varying degrees an attitude of benevolence toward the communist philosophy in general and the Russian Revolution in particular. Hence, these few months of army service proved extremely important for his future life.

In November, upon his return from Galicia, Hromádka entered upon his duties as the pastor of the church at Šonov, a small village near Náchod in the mountains of the Bohemian-Silesian frontier. He had accepted the election to this pastorate in March, but could not begin the pastorate because of the appointment to army duty. In Šonov the young pastor subjected his somewhat unsettled theological views to a rigorous examination: he was no longer a liberal, but on the other hand, he had not yet succeeded in definitely formulating his positive convictions within any of the recognized "orthodox" theological forms. He was seeking for a Biblical theology after the Reformation pattern, and hoped to find help in this task among the simple believers of his Šonov congregation. This transitional and incubatory period was greatly accelerated when he received an official directive to prepare himself for the appointment to the chair of systematic theology



in the recently organized Hus Protestant Theological Faculty. Now more than ever it was essential that he have a clearly thought-out system of theology. The realization of the tremendous and overwhelming responsibility for the theological training of the future ministers, and for the formation of a theological tradition of the Czech Brethren Church, rested heavily upon him.

He was appointed professor extraordinary on April 18, 1920, and assumed his responsible office on May 1, thus joining the hitherto existing faculty consisting of Professors Gustav A. Skalský (who had moved to Prague from Vienna and had become the first dean), Ferdinand Hrejsa (with whom Hromádka had been associated in the pastorate of the Salvátor Church), and František Žilka. At the same time he received his Ph.D. degree from the University of Prague. He was almost thirty-one, still unmarried. Some of his students, of whom there were 32 (only 15 of them regular), were but little younger than he. His theological views, although definitely anti-liberal, were by no means completely integrated around a stable theological focus. Nevertheless, as professor of systematic theology, Hromádka held an honored and influential position in the church, and soon expanded his activity into the life of the new faculty and republic. Since the theological faculty was a state-supported institution, it enjoyed full academic freedom in the education of the theological candidates for the ministry of the Czechoslovak and the Czech Brethren churches and was not dependent upon these churches. Nevertheless, there existed a harmonious relationship between it and the church authorities: the synodical senior of the latter church, Joseph Souček, was a man of a tolerant and conciliatory nature, while his co-senior, Ferdinand Hrejsa, was not only of generous disposition, but was a member of the faculty as well.

The theological orientation of the faculty members reflected, on the whole, the situation in the Czech Brethren Church: Professor Skalský, of the practical theology department, the oldest of the group, soon ceased to play any considerable rôle because of ill health and age. Professor Hrejsa, the historian, who had long been favorably inclined toward Hromádka, was eager to maintain general harmony among the members of the faculty. Professor Žilka of the New Testament department, a high-minded, gentlemanly representative of the liberal wing of the former Reformed Church, disdained to be involved in any controversy whatever. Despite Žilka's aversion to controversy, Hromádka waged with him an unrelenting struggle for influence over the appointments to the faculty as well as over the

student body. At first, he was not conspicuously successful. The superior prestige and rank, as well as the outstanding ability, of Žilka (still remembered for his excellent translation of the New Testament into modern Czech) made Hromádka's struggle by no means easy. The newer appointees to the faculty joined the camps thus formed: professor extraordinary, Slavomil Daněk, of the Old Testament department, on the whole supported Hromádka, although as time went on he increasingly asserted his independent views; the appointments of the docents, Fr. Linhart, Fr. Bednář (after Skalský's retirement in 1924), and F. M. Bartoš, aided Žilka's side. Consequently, Hromádka was not the leading member of the faculty until after his return from the United States.

But in his influence over the students Hromádka was more successful. Not that he enjoyed an undisputed prestige among them—for the student body was likewise divided between the two camps represented in the faculty; but he gained the loyal and sometimes enthusiastic support of a coterie of students who remained faithful to his leadership even after their graduation. For one thing, he was not much older than some of them; furthermore, he possessed an engaging and friendly personality and was accessible to the students. And finally, being always ready to speak at student gatherings, especially to the organization of the Protestant academic youth called "Jeroným" and later the academic Y.M.C.A.; and being uncommonly eloquent and enthusiastic (whatever his views of the moment were), he won the young people by these means. On the other hand, he was not only rigidly unyielding in defense of his convictions, but also an adroit controversialist in dealing with his opponents. He certainly was no coward: he may often have been unduly dogmatic, precipitous in judgment, lacking in judiciousness and balance. But his undoubted qualities of leadership placed him, in contrast with the older members of the faculty—Žilka among them—at an advantage. Žilka was of a retiring, scholarly, and somewhat formal disposition which was not attractive to the average university student.

Under these circumstances, it was inevitable that Hromádka sooner or later would precipitate an open controversy both with his colleagues and the liberal leaders in the church. His theological views could not fail to arouse opposition. For when he became acquainted with the emerging dialectical theology of Karl Barth, he at last found a satisfactory formulation of his own anti-liberal and Biblical views. This occurred in the summer of 1923. But he did not begin the study of Brunner until two years later.

He justified his repudiation of liberalism on the ground that it had fundamentally departed from the Reformation theology. He asserted that liberalism regards God as immanent in the world, sometimes as the moral law, sometimes in more theistic terms; while the Reformation theology stresses His transcendence. Along with Barth, Hromádka asserted that God is only transcendent, "Wholly Other," and consequently no one can have any knowledge of Him save through His revelation. This revelation occurred only in Jesus Christ. The human intellect is unable to find God. There exists, therefore, a gulf between God and man, between the finite and the infinite, which cannot be bridged by human means, whether they be those of reason, feeling, or will. Schleiermacher, the father of liberal theology, who had built his system on "the feeling of dependence upon God," had been followed—save for some minor variations on the main theme—by the entire liberal school of theology up to and including Troeltsch. Hromádka deduced from these presuppositions that the liberal concept of God is entirely inadequate and erroneous, for on that basis God is "no more than a higher meaning of the world, or universal and moral law."<sup>6</sup> The Reformation theology teaches, on the contrary, that no one can know God unless He reveals Himself, and no one can enter into communion with God unless He grants him the necessary grace. Hromádka's enthusiastic and almost rhapsodically eloquent defense of the newly-discovered "crisis theology" soon earned him the distinction of being regarded, both by his faculty colleagues and the liberal church circles generally, as the first Czech protagonist of Barthianism. "The inclusion of myself in this theological movement is not contrary to my mind," he wrote in 1927.<sup>7</sup>

An event of such significance as the acceptance of Barthianism by the professor of systematic theology of the Hus Faculty could not, of course, pass without a vigorous protest. For the merger of the Lutheran and the Reformed bodies into one, the Czech Brethren Church, did not obliterate the former partisan divisions within the constituent communions. As could have been anticipated, the process of actual amalgamation would last decades, if not generations. At first, conditions within the new body represented a compound of the forces which had previously existed within the component parts. There was, for instance, a small group of conservative Lutheran orthodox who regarded Hromádka as a renegade. A similar group existed within the former Reformed communion, and was dominated by the theology of Professor Eduard Böhl of the Vienna faculty, who was the son-in-law of the influential pastor of the Elberfeld church, H. F. Kohlbrüge; members of this group likewise found the Barthian Hromádka

unacceptable, as not being sufficiently orthodox. With this group were connected the Moravian superintendent, Ferdinand Císař, who was resentful because he was not given the leading rôle in the new church, and the pastors Joseph Hájek, father of the present synodical senior of the Czech Brethren Church, and Fr. Pokora.

But the majority of the prominent members of the Czech Brethren Church (among both of the former constituent bodies) were mildly liberal, anti-Catholic, progressive, nationalistic, Masarykian, stressing the similarities between the latter's religious and philosophical views and those of the Hussite Reformation. They were enthusiastic, although not critical, supporters of the "*Los von Rom*" movement, which resulted in the astonishing growth in the membership of the newly-created and radically anti-Roman Czechoslovak Church, which split from the Roman Catholic church in 1920 and developed into an episcopally organized body with Unitarian theology;<sup>8</sup> and by 1927 in the 60 per cent increase in the membership of the Czech Brethren Church.<sup>9</sup>

Hromádka assumed a critical, and at times even aggressive, attitude toward these popular opinions, and became something of an *enfant terrible* of Czechoslovak Protestantism. Theologically, he felt isolated: his Barthianism placed him in an unsupported theological outpost. He tried to find support from the conservative Protestant leaders, but with meagre results. He sought conferences with the outstanding minister of the conservative "free" Church (Congregational), the Rev. František Urbánek, of whom President Masaryk was uncommonly fond; and particularly with the ruggedly individualistic Jan Karafiát, a Reformed pastor in retirement, who had refused to join the new Czech Brethren Church. Karafiát was rigidly orthodox in the confessional sense of the word,<sup>10</sup> but also a man of genuine and contagious piety. Hromádka fell under his spell, as did many others. Karafiát is still remembered as the author of the charming little book for children, *The Fire-flies*, which has become a Czech literary classic. It was even translated into Russian, although in a properly expurgated version to fit the needs of Soviet schools! Hromádka himself characterized Karafiát as a "Calvinist with a broad education and a sensitive appreciation of the longing of the ancient Church of the Czech Brethren for a pure church of Jesus Christ."<sup>11</sup> Besides, Hromádka made tentative overtures to the Moravian conservatives of the Böhl school, but with no results. For, after all, they demanded an unconditional surrender to their traditional orthodoxy, without any compromise with biblical criticism—conditions which Hromádka could not accept.

The isolation in which Hromádka found himself and which he regarded as ostracism, provoked him to vigorous attacks upon the currently dominant ideas and movements. Not only did he continue his controversy with the liberals generally—denouncing among them even the most eloquent of the American Czech ministers, Joseph Křenek, who had returned from Silver Lake, Minnesota, to Czechoslovakia, for the express purpose of winning converts from the Roman Catholic to the Czech Brethren Church. Křenek, who later became the synodical senior of the Czech Brethren Church, had been educated in Union Theological Seminary in New York, and was an admirer of Harry Emerson Fosdick both in the latter's theology and in his manner of sermon delivery. Hromádka likewise severely criticized the mass "conversions" from Roman Catholicism either to the Czechoslovak or to the Czech Brethren churches. Many of the converts, it may be freely admitted, were motivated primarily by nationalistic zeal (holding the Roman Church guilty of close union with the hated Hapsburg monarchy), or by other less than purely religious reasons. Thus Hromádka's warning that the large influx of the poorly instructed or wholly uninstructed new members threatened to lower the level of the spiritual life of the church was not devoid of a considerable element of truth. But when he passed on to what appeared to the average Protestant as a defense of Roman Catholicism, the wrath thus aroused knew no bounds. It happened that Břetislav Hladký, the new editor of the weekly publication of the all-Protestant organization, *Kostnická Jednota* (The Union of Constance), entitled *Kostnické Jiskry* (The Sparks of Constance), asked Hromádka for a series of articles expounding his attitude toward Catholicism and commenting upon its current status. The editor, himself a recent convert from Roman Catholicism, was keenly interested in the reactions of the Protestant theologian to the church he himself had left. Hromádka thus began a task which aroused against him more opposition than anything else he had done heretofore. The project which began as a journalistic assignment led to the writing and publication of a fairly extensive book, *Catholicism and the Struggle for Christianity*.<sup>12</sup> In it Hromádka expounded the very unpopular view that "the classical principle of Christianity" is best represented in medieval Catholicism, and by comparing it with modern Protestant devotional life, he found the latter wanting. I regret that I have not been able to secure a copy of the book and cannot, therefore, form a personal judgment regarding its thesis.

The book created, understandably enough, an immense sensation, for it cut athwart both the popular nationalistic and the liberal religious



opinions. The moderate liberals were now aroused to a public protest: some Prague Protestant ministers issued a resolution condemning Hromádka's analysis as well as his conclusions. The editor of *Kostnické Jiskry* who had requested the articles lost his position, and the new editor, Dr. Antonín Boháč, a lay member of the Synodical Council, and later the Curator of the Czech Brethren Church, levelled against Hromádka the charge that he had uncritically succumbed to Roman Catholicism and had "inwardly become its captive." Hromádka's surrender resulted, Boháč wrote, in bringing confusion into the Protestant ranks. "I cannot hold Professor Hromádka free from the serious charge that it is he who contributed most to this confusion."<sup>13</sup> Hromádka was also accused of obstructing the movement away from the Roman Church and thus preventing some who might have joined the Czech Brethren Church from taking that step.

Even more serious were the objections raised by one of the pastors, the Rev. František Hrejsa, brother of Professor Ferdinand Hrejsa, in an article published in a monthly, *Kalich*, edited by Professor Žilka. His criticism may be summarized by saying that Hromádka failed to prove his thesis that the "classical" principles of Christianity found their best expression in medieval Catholicism, and that modern liberal Protestantism was deficient in this respect. He charged that Hromádka did not apply to Catholicism the same criteria that he utilized against liberal Protestantism. He particularly singled out for criticism Hromádka's assertion that Christianity consists in "a firm and definite world view,"<sup>14</sup> and declared this analysis to be wholly inadequate: "Christianity is a great deal more than a world view," he wrote. The already mentioned radical liberal, J. B. Kozák, expressed the judgment that "Hromádka's 'classical principles of Christianity' lead to reactionary sympathies with everything pointing to the past, to the stressing of 'solidarity' with Catholicism, etc."<sup>15</sup> With biting sarcasm he ridiculed Hromádka as the "official mythologist of the Czech Brethren Church." But this was obviously unfair both to the Church and to Hromádka.

Equally provocative and irritating was Hromádka's espousal of those other unpopular causes of the time, a favorable attitude toward and a defense of, communism and the Bolshevik Revolution. He seemed to have a penchant—amounting almost to a fascination—for unpopular causes. In this particular matter he joined forces with a certain Dr. Konopásek, at whose house he resided along with his younger brother, Bohumil, then a divinity student. Konopásek, a man of unstable mind and a fiery disposition, exercised a considerable influence upon Hro-

mádka; it is likely that he encouraged the latter in his pro-communist sympathies. This flirting with "leftist" opinions—if such was the case—was doubly significant in the context of the prevailing political situation: for the Social Democratic Party, at the time the strongest political party in the Republic, was just then passing through a period of tension and internal struggle between its right and left wings. The former participated in the government, while the latter, strongly inclining to communism, opposed a policy of cooperation with the "bourgeois" elements and advocated a revolutionary policy. Hromádka sympathized with the left wing, although he was not a party member, and for that reason was drawn into a controversy with Antonín Boháč. He furthermore publicly avowed his "leftist" views at the first Convention of the Czechoslovak Protestants which was held on the Slavonic Island in Prague, July 27–30, 1923, although he must have known that such a pronouncement would produce the same effect upon the liberal democrats as the red rag would on a bull. In an address delivered at this important meeting he referred to communism in an aggressively defensive fashion by declaring: "And finally I remind you of the frequently derided and proscribed atheistic, materialistic socialism. How did it happen that there are men who wish to build a new society on entirely non-religious and materialistic foundations? How much concentrated, scientific thought and effort exist in Marxism, syndicalism, and revolutionary communism! How much despair, but also of idealism, enthusiasm, and devoted service! . . . Socialism and communism cannot be brushed aside with a mere phrase 'materialism' and 'atheism'."<sup>16</sup> Thus it is important to note that Hromádka was favorably inclined toward communism quite early in his career, so that his later pro-communist phases are like reappearances of an underground river.

<sup>1</sup> J. L. Hromádka, *Cesty protestantského theologa* (Prague, 1927), 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Křesťanská Revue*, xx, 6 (August, 1953), 167.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. J. B. Kozák, *Essay o víře a vědě* (Prague, 1924), particularly 139 ff.

<sup>5</sup> *Cesty*, 57.

<sup>6</sup> *Sborník Husovy fakulty, 1919–1929* (Prague, 1930), 197.

<sup>7</sup> *Cesty*, 13.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. my article, "The Religious Situation in Czechoslovakia," in Robert J. Kerner, ed., *Czechoslovakia, Twenty Years of Independence* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1940), 293 ff.

<sup>9</sup> *Deset let českobratrské evangelické církve, 1918–1928* (Prague, 1928) 27 ff.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Hromádka's article about Karafiát in *Kalendář českobratrský* (Prague, 1926), 50 ff.

<sup>11</sup> *Theologie a církev* (Prague, 1949), 236.

<sup>12</sup> J. L. Hromádka, *Katolicismus a boj o křesťanství* (Prague, 1925).

<sup>13</sup> *Kostnické Jiskry*, 1925, 84.

<sup>14</sup> *Kalich*, x, 5 (May, 1926), 140 ff.

<sup>15</sup> J. B. Kozák, *Essay o víře a vědě* (Prague, 1924), 145.

<sup>16</sup> *I. Sjezd československých evangeliků* (Prague, 1923), 145.

## Chapter II: The Anti-Fascist Phase 1924–1939

Hromádka's marriage, in 1924, with Miss Náda Lukl had a significance far exceeding that of a personal and private affair. The bridegroom, who was then thirty-five, was marrying an eighteen year old bride belonging to a wealthy, socially prominent, and highly influential family. Her father, a Prague physician, had acquired a dominating position not only in the fashionable Vinohrady Czech Brethren Church, of which he was an elder, and to which the Masaryk family belonged at one time, but he likewise possessed a commanding influence in the wider area of the denomination as a whole. The bride's mother belonged to one of the few wealthy Protestant families resident in Prague. Hence, Hromádka, who despite his highly respected academic position was not accorded the honors of being "accepted" by the upper bourgeoisie, all of a sudden found himself integrated into the best Protestant social circles of Prague. A theologian of proletarian sympathies, although not of proletarian origin, he became part and parcel of the "*haute-monde*" of the fashionable residential quarter of Vinohrady, to which he moved and where he and his bride established their home in one of the houses belonging to his father-in-law. The new social connections thus established gradually helped to moderate and modify the tense relations existing between him and the dominant church circles. In the end, he was "accepted."

But that is not to say that he completely abandoned his unpopular convictions or ceased to defend them. On the contrary, the conflict with his colleague, František Linhart, professor of the philosophy of religion and a staunch liberal, broke out anew. This time the controversy centered about Hromádka's "dialectical theology." "All his [Hromádka's] pronouncements," wrote Linhart, "are clear proofs that he simply does not know the thought movements in modern theology and philosophy, save the decadent German theology of Barth, which he embraced as the saving remedy for the solution of the modern crisis, unaware that this theological tendency will find but meagre response in the theological world."<sup>1</sup>

But Hromádka was no longer interested in gaining recognition among the coteries of either the liberals or the conservatives. Long a critical but devoted disciple of T. G. Masaryk, he gave an increasingly larger amount of attention and time to the study of this greatly beloved and enthusiastically acclaimed intellectual and political leader of the Czechoslovak people. Hromádka became sufficiently acceptable to the church authorities to be requested to prepare the officially approved

*Principles of the Czech Brethren Evangelical Church* (1927). He also found support among the younger ministers who had been won by him during their student years, and who now formed a nucleus of the growing Hromádka party in the church. In 1927 he was raised to the rank of full professor, and served as dean during the next academic year—an honor which he enjoyed a number of times thereafter. During this period he published his most scholarly and extensive work, *Christianity in Thought and Life* (1931). Moreover, Hromádka found a wider and more congenial field of labor among the academic youth, particularly those connected with the Y.M.C.A., and in the political and the cultural life of the Republic.

The period between 1924 and 1939 may therefore be conveniently divided into two phases: 1924 to 1933, a period during which Hromádka, together with Professor Emanuel Rádl, established their almost undisputed leadership of the Academic Y.M.C.A.; and from 1933 to 1939, during which the two collaborators conducted a vigorous anti-fascist campaign.

First of all, then, let us consider the first period. Hromádka learned from Masaryk that philosophy is no aristocratic, exclusivist "high-brow" concern for academic hermits, but a concrete, carefully thought-out and critically tested directive of action. Hromádka likewise shared with Marx the view that it is not enough to understand the world intellectually, but that one must also change it practically. This concept of the social responsibility of the intellectual class drove him into practical attempts to change society in accordance with his religious convictions. He found the best opportunity to extend his influence beyond the walls of his lecture room among the academic youth and the cultural and political organizations. Henceforth, he limited his academic work to a minimum in order to devote as much time as possible to these social tasks.

In this extra-curricular activity he joined hands with Emanuel Rádl, professor of philosophy in the natural science department of the Charles University, and a pupil of Masaryk. The latter's motivation for seeking an opportunity for wider personal influence and usefulness was curiously similar to Hromádka's. Rádl, too, found but little appreciation or support among his confrères of the University philosophy department, for the recognized philosophical coryphaeus in the official university circles was František Krejčí, a convinced and doctrinaire positivist. Rádl, therefore, tried to find adherents to his philosophical views outside, rather than inside, the University. Thus both men, Rádl and Hromádka, found in each other what they missed in their

proper academic milieu—a similarity of world view and a loyal co-operation in the social reconstruction.

An opportunity for extensive work was offered them by the Y.M.C.A., which needed men of Rádl's and Hromádka's calibre and stature to provide mature and yet stimulating intellectual and religious leadership for the young men and women among whom it worked. Hromádka was at first doubtful whether the organization would be sufficiently amenable to his particular theological aims. But at last he decided to utilize it for his purposes. Along with Rádl, he organized the so-called Academic Y.M.C.A., which comprised the religiously-interested youth irrespective of their religious affiliation. Moreover, he expanded his repertoire of lectures by including among the topics and discussions extensive and popularly appealing interpretations of Masaryk and Dostoevsky. Such studies then furnished him material for a number of relatively small publications devoted to these thinkers, to whom he has professed an attachment ever since. Besides lectures of this kind, both leaders of the group engaged in discussions of current topics of a national or international political character. They conducted annual conferences which were attended by several hundred students, and which were almost exclusively under their direction and influence. In 1937 they established a monthly publication, *Křestanská Revue* (The Christian Review), which was completely under their own control. Thus they were able to gather about themselves a select group of enthusiastic disciples who formed practically a "closed corporation." But as it happens in such cases, the group was not conspicuously successful in avoiding the dangers of becoming a "mutual admiration society."

The second phase of this period began early in 1933, when Adolf Hitler was appointed Reich Chancellor by the senile President von Hindenburg. This fateful event, which in the end led to the destruction of the independence of Czechoslovakia and to the outbreak of the Second World War, was discerned by Rádl for what it actually turned out to be. In his book, *The German Revolution*,<sup>2</sup> he analysed the situation with great insight. Hromádka accepted his friend's findings and once more promptly embarked upon intensive political activity which thereafter dominated him up to his departure from Czechoslovakia in 1939. His anti-fascist pronouncements, articles, and other public activity revived his pro-communist sympathies, so that the two attitudes often coalesced. Thus, for instance, when the head of the German communist party, Ernest Thälmann, was arrested (on March 3, 1933), on the charge of participating in the burning of the Reichstag,



and was placed on trial in 1935, Hromádka came to his aid by writing articles in which he vigorously denounced the illegal methods used against Thálmann by the Nazi court. He pointed out that the accused had been charged with an attempt to overthrow the Weimar Constitution "which the Hitlerites themselves hated and thoroughly trampled upon."<sup>3</sup> He likewise defended the Bulgarian communist, Georgi Dimitrov, later the head of the Comintern, who was also implicated in the fire which was subsequently proved to have been started by the "brown-shirts" themselves. Hromádka wrote: "My social-political views are considerably to the 'left,'"—a pronouncement which was no overstatement!<sup>4</sup>

When the Spanish civil war broke out (1936), Hromádka became a member of the Committee for Democratic Spain, stood with a collection box on a Prague square to secure contributions for the cause, and joined in singing the "Internationale." In commenting on the brutalities perpetrated against the Spanish clergy and monks (although gruesome bestialities were committed by both armies), he expressed the opinion that they suffered principally on account of the social injustices with which the Church was associated, and that unfortunately the innocent suffered along with the guilty. He found the basic significance of the Spanish civil war in "the definite collapse of the liberal and democratic bourgeoisie. Hitler and Mussolini are today the leaders of the bourgeoisie and of the well-to-do peasants in all European countries. . . . Real democracy cannot depend . . . on the bourgeois elements. If the socialistic working class were to be defeated, the bell would soon toll for democracy as well."<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, he was not ready at the time to declare himself wholly on either side: "Nor do I wish to say," he wrote, "that Christ stands today on the side of the anti-fascist, anti-Hitler, and pro-socialist or pro-democratic front."<sup>6</sup> There exists injustice and wrong on all fronts, and all need God's forgiveness for their sins. On another occasion, when Hromádka addressed an audience composed predominantly of communists and social democrats, he told them explicitly that he would speak to them "in the name of my Lord, who is my highest authority. . . . But just because I believe in Him, I am ready to help anyone who fights in behalf of liberty, freedom, well-being, and justice of all the poor, oppressed, insulted and injured."<sup>7</sup> And yet, when dealing with Soviet Russia, and despite his denunciations of the coarse brutalities perpetrated by the Soviet regime during the Great Purge of 1936, he declared himself *politically* closer to the Soviet regime than to the poor victims of that regime's insane rage. He wrote: "The

Moscow August trial shook us mightily because we saw in it the degradation and humiliation of simple humanity. Even though those who judged are politically closer to us than those who were judged, yet we cannot rid ourselves of the impression, that there is a fundamental flaw in the system of the present Moscow rulers, if they can present the trial to the world in the manner which they adopted."<sup>8</sup> I freely confess that such a pronouncement astounds and grieves me beyond measure, and that I am unable to understand how any Christian—not to say a Christian theologian—could feel himself "politically closer" to the Soviet regime during the period of the hysterical orgy of the years 1936–37, unless he were grossly misinformed, or refused to view the holocaust realistically. But the fact remains that Hromádka did write the words quoted above, and has remained ever since convinced of the essential rightness of the revolutionary cause. He was ready to help the cause of communism in Spain as well as in the Soviet Union despite any ideological differences which certainly existed between him and the communists. Such is, then, the second phase of Hromádka's active and sympathetic relation with the communist cause publicly avowed long before the Czechoslovak communist *coup* of 1948.

President Masaryk resigned his high office in 1935 because of his advancing years (he was 85 at the time) and retired to his beloved château of Lány. The election held on December 18 resulted, as had been generally anticipated, in the election of Dr. Eduard Beneš, Masaryk's long-time disciple and close collaborator. Hromádka was among those who heartily approved of this political development, for he saw in Beneš "the most representative type of a democratic politician." "Dr. Beneš almost embodies the spirit of democratic politics," he wrote in 1936.<sup>9</sup> After Masaryk's death in the Fall of 1937, the relation between Czechoslovakia and Nazi Germany visibly worsened and soon assumed a critical character. Hromádka loyally supported President Beneš and defended his policy against hostile criticisms. The crisis was reached in the fateful Munich Pact of September 30, 1938, in which France and England yielded to the demands of Hitler and Mussolini and agreed to the fatal dismemberment of Czechoslovakia by cutting Sudetenland from that country and incorporating it within the Reich. Thereafter, the defense of the rest of the country was utterly hopeless. Despite Hitler's solemn promise that he had no further territorial demands to make and that he did not want "a single foot of the Czech soil," the Nazi armies invaded Czechoslovakia on March 15, 1939. Hromádka clearly realized that

his anti-fascist activity and his active support of the Beneš government had compromised him so deeply that he could expect no mercy at the hands of the new rulers. Henceforth, he sought means of escaping abroad.

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<sup>1</sup> *Kotnické Jiskry*, 1927, 42 f.

<sup>2</sup> Emanuel Rádl, *O německé revoluci* (Prague, 1933)

<sup>3</sup> *Křesťanská Revue*, IX (1936), 34.

<sup>4</sup> J. L. Hromádka, *Mezi Východem a Západem* (Prague, 1945), preface.

<sup>5</sup> "Mezi španělskem a Moskvou," in *Křesťanská Revue*, IX (1936), 292.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 294.

<sup>7</sup> *Mezi Východem a Západem*, 15.

<sup>8</sup> *Křesťanská Revue*, IX (1936), 296.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

### Chapter III: The American Interlude

In seeking to escape from the threatening situation which confronted him at home, Dr. Hromádka was unusually fortunate. Normally, "politicals" were not allowed to leave the country legally. Hromádka's case was an exception in so far as that a friendly Czech police official promptly removed all incriminating evidence from Hromádka's file, so that he received the visa for himself and his family (wife and two young daughters) without any difficulty. He stated as the purpose of his trip a lecture tour to Switzerland, so that the object of the trip seemed to the officials innocent enough. Before he left Prague, he went for a last look at the beloved city. At the great Hus monument on the Old Town Square he met an old acquaintance, a leftist intellectual, who told him of his intention to seek refuge in Russia. Hromádka later wrote about this incident as being symbolical of the all-important and fateful decision confronting his country: should it seek help in the East or the West?<sup>1</sup> For himself at the time he chose the West. I wonder if in the light of the subsequent events he does not regard his 1939 decision as a mistake!

The Hromádka family left Prague on April 22, 1939. Upon reaching Switzerland, he again found that luck was on his side: for he succeeded in securing from friendly American consular officials permission to emigrate to the United States. He arrived in this country in May. Almost immediately he was invited to lecture at both Union and Princeton seminaries, so that for the time being he was economically modestly secure. Later, thanks to the kind offices of his former fellow-student at Aberdeen, and at the time president of Princeton Theological Seminary, Dr. John Mackay, Hromádka was appointed the Stuart Guest Professor of Apologetics and Christian Ethics in that institution. He held this important chair until 1947 when he returned to his homeland. Nevertheless, during that time he also retained his professorship in the Hus Theological Faculty. For although the school was closed by the new German masters, as were all the university-grade schools in the country, most of the professors retained their posts. Only the "political unreliaables" did not. Why Hromádka was not included in the latter category I do not know.

There are three definite stages in Hromádka's political orientation during his American period. First of all, dismayed over the terrible collapse of his beloved country under the onslaught of the Nazis, and a short time later utterly disheartened by the Russo-German Pact of August 23, 1939, Hromádka pinned his hopes exclusively on the rôle

of the United States. Then when on June 22, 1941, Germany perfidiously invaded the Soviet Union, Hromádka quickly readjusted his view of the changed international situation, and consistently supported the thesis that victory over the Fascist forces, and the rebuilding of the post-war world, were possible only by the loyal cooperation of the United States and the Soviet Union. When at last the Second World War was over with the unconditional surrender, on May 7, 1945, of Germany to the Western Allies and Russia, but the victors unfortunately began to pull apart, Hromádka entered upon a period of hesitation, during which he more and more inclined to the side of the Soviets. He was still at this stage of his political fence-walking when he returned to Prague.

A few years after his arrival in America, he described in glowing terms his renewed hopes and expectations at the beginning of his American period: "The New World beyond the Atlantic," he then wrote, "rose in our minds and hearts as the last and unshakable stronghold of human decency, civil freedom, and good will. . . . After the frightful collapse of the democratic Europe, it was America that remained the only hope of all freedom-loving men. Our expectations were not disappointed."<sup>2</sup> Thereupon, with astonishing rapidity, he threw himself into the Czechoslovak Resistance Struggle by his declared support of, and cooperation with, President Beneš. Scarcely a month after his arrival, he spoke at a mass meeting of American Czechoslovaks held in Chicago (June 8, 1939), at which he declared himself a spokesman for the patriotic masses at home: "Even then we looked upon the departing President Beneš not only as a symbol of strength and resistance, but also of the Czechoslovak nation's tragedy. . . . Beneš' name expressed and still expresses our nation's glory, but also its suffering and tragedy."<sup>3</sup> Thus Hromádka then steadfastly declared himself on the side of the Masaryk-Beneš type of political democracy.

He likewise lent his prestige and aid in organizing the Czechoslovak churches in this country (except the Lutheran) into the National Union of Czechoslovak Protestants in the United States and Canada. He became the chief editor of the monthly magazine founded by the Union, *Husův Lid* (The People of Hus), and a collection of his articles, published originally in this periodical, was later republished in book form.<sup>4</sup> Within an astonishingly short period of time he became so favorably known in ever widening circles that he frequently received invitations to lecture in schools and universities, conferences, political and cultural organizations, and churches. Since for the greater



part he attempted to interpret the European or the world situation, his activity throughout the eight years of his residence in this country assumed an aspect far more political and cultural than theological. The only English work which he published during this period, entitled *Doom and Resurrection* (1945), is also predominantly cultural-political in character.

In the titanic struggle which was being waged between the democratic West and the forces of German nazism and Italian fascism, Hromádka fought as much against American isolationism and pacifism as against the European totalitarianisms. He asserted that it was "Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini [who] systematically spread the bacilli of disintegration and confusion among the free nations."<sup>5</sup> Nor did he at that time think it impossible that, after the collapse of Germany, "Soviet Russia will try to secure sovereignty over all the unhappy European countries."<sup>6</sup> He saw in "Great Britain [and partly in the United States which was not at war then] the sole support, hope, and guarantee of our national existence."<sup>7</sup> His devotion to this country was then effusive: "We love America and have a deep appreciation of the traditions and ideals of this country. Our devotion to America is ever greater as we realize more clearly that the heritage of our best spiritual and political leaders is in surprising harmony with the heritage of American history."<sup>8</sup>

The second phase of this period began with the invasion of Russia by the German armies. For although Hromádka regarded the Russo-German Pact as inexcusable, and wrote that "it is impossible to expunge . . . the grotesque collaboration of communism with the most doubtful fascist, isolationist and other reactionary elements,"<sup>9</sup> yet as soon as the Soviet territory was invaded by the German army, and the armies of the United States and Great Britain ranged themselves on the side of the Russians, Hromádka urged with all the eloquence at his disposal (and he is eloquent!) that it is absolutely essential for the safety of the world that the three great powers come to terms among themselves and form a permanent organization for the preservation of world peace. This was, of course, the conviction of Wendell Wilkie and other American leaders as well. Hromádka asserted that "of the world as we knew it before 1939, not one stone remains on top of another."<sup>10</sup>

But could the Soviet leaders be believed? Were they not playing a game with the West, accepting its military and lend-lease aids with the view to turning upon their erst-while benefactors and repaying them evil for good? Who would guarantee that our good will and con-

fidence would not be abused and betrayed? No one! answered Hromádka. Nevertheless, we must trust Russia. If instead of cooperation, the relation between East and West should be one of distrust, then the future of the world is indeed hopeless. With a prophetic, almost uncanny, insight, he penned these words in October, 1943: "What sort of freedom for small nations would there be if the territory between Germany and the Soviet Union were to become one of distrust and tension, and if the Soviets in self-defense were forced to fortify their Western boundary? What sort of freedom would then exist for the Estonians, Letts, Poles, Roumanians, Czechs and Slovaks? May be that the West would then come with all its might to the aid of Germany. And may be that Soviet Russia would then try to secure the cooperation of the German radical elements—even at our expense."<sup>11</sup> What a prophetic vision!

Nevertheless, even then Hromádka's attitude toward Soviet Russia and toward communist theory and practice was not altogether uncritical, although it still was generally unwarrantedly optimistic and sometimes even unrealistic. He admitted that theoretical Marxism was materialistic and "too weak to construct, on the ruins of the old world, an organic, moral, national, and political unity of 180 million people."<sup>12</sup> And although he believed in the sincerity and good faith of Stalin when the latter allowed the election of Metropolitan Sergei as patriarch (1943), and saw in it an evidence of new spiritual life in Russia, yet he wrote, "We are not such naive children as to imagine that the Soviet government has been converted to Christianity and that the Soviet youth will henceforth be brought up in Sunday schools!"<sup>13</sup>

An event of far reaching importance in its effects was Hromádka's visit to England and Scotland some time in the summer of 1943, before the conclusion of the War. The Beneš government-in-exile still had its headquarters in London. Hromádka was received with utmost cordiality both by President Beneš and the members of his cabinet. His considerable services in behalf of the Resistance Movement were handsomely and freely acknowledged, and his opinions and advice were sought. He realized as never before how favorably he was regarded by President Beneš, and conceived the plan of functioning as an unofficial "conscience" of the regime. The desire to exercise moral influence upon the restored Beneš government after the conclusion of the War furnished probably the strongest incentive for Hromádka's return to Czechoslovakia.

Nevertheless, after the conclusion of the conflict, it soon became clearly evident that the dream of the post-war cooperation between

the war-time allies was not likely to be realized. Hromádka then stood at the greatest crisis of his life: should East and West drift apart and split the world into two warring factions, which side was he to support? He was then still in the United States, trying to make up his mind whether or not to return to Czechoslovakia. Princeton urged him to remain, for by that time he had gained for himself an enviable reputation as a forceful and extremely popular teacher and lecturer. But he was still a member of the reopened Hus Theological Faculty at Prague, and was pressed by his Czech colleagues to return. More than that, President Beneš, already reestablished in Prague, urged him to come back, desiring his advice and counsel. When, late in 1945, Hromádka returned to the United States from his first visit to the liberated Czechoslovakia, where he had spent some three months, he startled his intimate friends by telling them that even Klement Gottwald had urged him to return, "because our nation desperately needs moral strength." An unnamed communist poet expressed himself even in stronger terms: "We communists know that without metaphysics we get nowhere! Come back, Professor, we need you!" Hromádka undoubtedly saw himself in the rôle of an unofficial adviser to both President Beneš and Klement Gottwald, and—who knows—perhaps as exercising a potent moral influence over the Communist Party itself!

This change in his thinking is discernible more clearly than ever before in the lecture on "Communism and Christianity" which he delivered to a group of ministers in Hradec Králové on the last day of August, 1946, during his second visit to Czechoslovakia. The circumstances under which he gave this lecture are of some interest: the address was to have been delivered by Zdeněk Nejedlý, the most learned of the Czech communists, although Hromádka was likewise on the program. But for some reason—perhaps because of a hint from the Party—Nejedlý could not or would not come. Hromádka then delivered both addresses.

His exposition of the Marxist philosophy already clearly indicated how far he had gone toward accepting certain basic assumptions of the Marxist world-view. This is not to say that he was converted to Marxism. But his own theological convictions led him to assume that "the world lieth in evil," and they now merged with the Marxist presupposition that it is the corrupt old world of Western bourgeois capitalism which "lieth in evil." At any rate, whatever is the provenance of Hromádka's thought on the subject, he declared that the Western civilization is in ruins, utterly impotent either to preserve

itself or to offer successful opposition to the virile upsurge of the proletarian class. He was as convinced of this as any dogmatic Marxist who believes in the inevitable result of the dialectical process whereby the classless society will be built on the ruins of bourgeois capitalism, no matter who opposes or supports it.

The lecture itself outlines the communist philosophy in an evidently apologetic spirit. Hromádka states correctly the principle of dialectical materialism with its corollary that the entire structure of society is created by its economic substratum; but thereupon he softens this assertion by warning that this must not be understood as if "the spiritual and cultural aspects of life [were] a mechanical expression of the economic status and organization of a given period."<sup>14</sup> But that is precisely what the official communist Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist philosophy teaches! The cultural "superstructure" which includes religion, is determined by the economic "substructure," and determined mechanically, since man himself is but a product of these economic forces and hence does not possess the freedom to change them! Hromádka contradicts himself further by asserting that although philosophical and religious ideology *appears* to exert decisive influence in history, "actually the decisive, driving forces, according to Marx's school, are always economic realities and motives."<sup>15</sup> He declares that Marxism "is a great philosophy, an excellent exposition of the historical process."<sup>16</sup> Yet, he disagrees with it in certain particulars as being insufficient to account for and to explain all human life, particularly on its spiritual side. Then again he contradicts himself by asserting that Marxism suffices to explain the world, but not to transform it.<sup>17</sup>

In evaluating the then current situation in Czechoslovakia, Hromádka likewise exhibits a favorable attitude toward communism, even though occasionally he expresses a disagreement with it. He regards the Czechoslovak communist party as the bearer of "progress in our public life," and declares that a conflict with it would be a misfortune. But communism, he asserts, "cannot be apprehended in its kernel and its essential goals without the Christian tradition, and the best gains of the communist revolution and activity cannot be saved without Christianity. . . . If a conflict should break out [between communism and Christianity], it would be because Catholicism has become a political power and a focal point of world reaction, while communism has taken upon itself the form of a religious movement."<sup>18</sup> He admits that "at first" the Russian Revolution was atheistic, but holds that such is no longer the case.

It is evident from this analysis that by the Fall of 1946 Hromádka

was not far from being truly a fellow-traveler. In his view, communism was "essentially" a constructive movement, growing out of the Christian tradition, and (although the real communists did not know it) in need of Christian support for the successful completion and perpetuation of its own aims. To these views there was little to be added after 1948!

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<sup>1</sup> Zítřek (New York, 1942), 83.

<sup>2</sup> *The American-Czechoslovak Fellowship* (Chicago, 1942), I, 1, 8.

<sup>3</sup> *Pravda z vítězí* (Chicago, 1939), 5.

<sup>4</sup> *Z druhého běhu* (Prague, 1945).

<sup>5</sup> *Husův Lid*, I (Chicago, 1940), 52.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 88.

<sup>9</sup> Zítřek (1942), 87.

<sup>10</sup> *Z druhého běhu*, 82.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 99-100.

<sup>12</sup> *Mezi Východem a Západem*, 59.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Komunismus a křesťanství* (Hradec Králové, 1946), 30.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-44.



## Chapter IV: Hromádka, the Prophet of Doom

Hromádka returned to Czechoslovakia in 1947. It was not an easy matter for him to decide upon this step. His work at Princeton Theological Seminary had met with an enthusiastic appreciation both among students and faculty. His influence in this country was growing, for he had earned for himself a reputation as a vigorous thinker and a forceful speaker. I remember my last visit at his home in Princeton, when we walked the streets for about an hour, discussing the *pros* and *cons* of the problem. He felt his responsibility to the Hus Theological Faculty in Prague, of which he was officially still a member. But even more he stressed the opportunity offered him in acting as an unofficial adviser of President Beneš, and even of Klement Gottwald, both of whom he pictured as being eager for his return. These latter considerations outweighed, in Hromádka's mind, his academic career or his theological leadership. I quite agreed that it was his duty to return, even though he might have a brilliant career in this country. But it must be remembered that at the time President Beneš was still alive, and I did not anticipate the communist *coup* which occurred in February, 1948. If Hromádka had any inkling of it, he did not say so.

Having established himself, next to Professor Bednář, as the leading member of the Faculty, Hromádka quickly became the leader of the Protestant life of the country, and began to exercise a wide influence in public life. His report on the current American situation already manifested his growing distrust of the forces "foreign to the genius of America" which were coming to the front. Reactionary elements, he feared, were becoming strengthened, particularly because of the power of Roman Catholicism. Even then his future decision to join the "progressive" forces of communism was being formed: "If the reactionary elements in America," he wrote, "were to gain complete victory, then I, a lover of America, would feel constrained, as one freely determining his actions, and despite all my friendship with many people in the United States, to stand on the side of the East."<sup>1</sup> This was a momentous utterance. To be sure, at that time he was still hopeful, as he had been after Roosevelt's death,<sup>2</sup> that "the other America," the progressive America, would win the battle against reaction. But what he meant by "the other America" is clearly evident from his identification of it with men like Henry A. Wallace (to whom he had dedicated his one English book, *Doom and Resurrection*), whom he compared with Masaryk. Under these circum-

stances, Hromádka was surely doomed to disappointment as to the future of "the other America!"

Henceforth, his progress toward "the side of the East" was rapid. Toward the end of 1947 he visited the Soviet Union, having been appointed a member of the official delegation sent to take part in the celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. He had greatly desired to make a trip to Russia even during his 1946 stay in Czechoslovakia, but he had failed to get the visa, despite President Beneš' support. The Russians then had claimed that there were no accommodations in Moscow—the stereotyped excuse for keeping foreigners from observing the real conditions in the country. Upon his return from Moscow after a two weeks' visit, Hromádka spoke of Soviet life in glowing terms. "My general impression was strong," he reported. . . . "Perhaps the most powerful [impression] was made on me by the realization of the unique and incomparable changes in the basis of Soviet life which have occurred within a relatively short time. Society has become . . . monolithic. Human dignity has been elevated and secured by the conditions of the new life created for the working people and the peasants. . . . You observe no social barriers among the masses. Schools are open to all, obligatory for all. Immense housing projects for the workers are in the process of construction where only recently there existed tumbled-down shacks. The local and regional governments of cities, communities, and counties are in the hands of the working people. When you consider what Russian society was like thirty years ago, you cannot escape the powerful impression of change. . . . You also hear (and feel) that increased attention is being given to family life, and that in relations between man and woman, boy and girl, there exists a much purer, more genuine, healthier and uncorrupted atmosphere than in the West or among us. . . . People of the Soviet Union have so much to do and so many tasks to perform that they have neither time for, nor interest in, cultivating sickly sexual life."<sup>3</sup> For a man who spent only two weeks in the Soviet Union, and who had no opportunity to go beyond the limited area of the usual "show" sections of Moscow, this is really quite handsome! One cannot but feel what different yard-sticks he applies to the situation in the Soviet Union and in the Western democracies.

As for the religious conditions, Hromádka also gave just the sort of description which his Russian hosts wanted him to convey: "On the one hand," he reported, "it is evident that the younger generation, and precisely the most vigorous and effective members of it, grows up absolutely without any direct religious or ecclesiastical influence

or education. Society is becoming increasingly secularist." But Hromádka did not seem to have been worried or alarmed about that. "Minister Karpov [the head of the office for the Orthodox religious affairs, and roughly the counterpart of the old tsarist procurator of the Holy Governing Synod, despite the constitutional separation of church and state] secured for me an interview with the patriarch; and our Minister, Zdeněk Nejedlý, tried to help me to see what as a theologian I should see. The patriarch is an unusually intelligent man who carries a terrible burden of responsibility for the Church, and who knows what the mission of the Church is and who understands the meaning of our time. . . . But I do not know whether the Orthodox Church will become a source of spiritual life which will penetrate the structure of the present-day Soviet society. It is possible that other sources of spiritual growth and endeavor will be opened."<sup>4</sup> Did not Hromádka see that the Russian Church had again become a tool of the state as it had been under tsarism? Was not proof of such subjection furnished by the Moscow patriarchate itself in the book published by it?<sup>5</sup> Can one excuse Hromádka's blindness to the real conditions in which the Russian Church found itself by supposing that he did not know them? I am certain that he is too intelligent to be so excused.

With such a favorable predisposition toward communism, it should not have caused as much surprise as, I confess, it did cause to some of us, to find Hromádka ready to accept the new Czechoslovak communist regime almost as soon as it seized the reins of government in the *coup d'état* (February, 1948), although with outwardly legal forms. In March, he published an article in which he declared that the events occurring in Czechoslovakia were a part of the world-wide revolution, and as such were permanent, not transient. "Only a blind person can speculate about a forcible restoration of the former status." For himself, he chose to "accept the event," and hence concluded with a positive affirmation, "We have decided to cooperate in the building of our life under the new conditions. We want to do so under the supreme leadership of our Lord Jesus Christ, Crucified and Risen. We believe that beyond the limits of the national, social, and political life, there exists a holy of holies, a place where the sovereign God speaks in His Word to the human soul and to the whole Church. This living Word is our last and highest authority which decides our life and death. There is no earthly authority which can cross the threshold of this holy of holies. . . . Therefore, we fear nothing. We look to the days to come with hope and peace."<sup>6</sup>

To his American readers he explained the February *coup* and

his own attitude to it in much fuller terms. He asserted that the February events signalized the breakdown of the Czechoslovak bourgeoisie. The latter were politically and morally incapable of coping with the situation. They had no program. On the other hand, "The communists and the radical socialists may have been ruthless and unscrupulous, but they knew what they wanted and what was to be done." To Hromádka, this justified the communist seizure: he did not discuss—at least not realistically—what it was that the communists wanted, but merely affirmed repeatedly that "they knew what they wanted." Henceforth, Czechoslovakia "has become part and parcel of the Eastern orbit . . ." But even so, Hromádka thought that "our Czechoslovak mission remains to be a country where democratic freedoms and civil rights are grounded on the broadest socialist basis: to be a country which might bring together all that is great in both Western and Eastern Europe."<sup>7</sup>

He was likewise far franker in this American article in expressing his attitude toward the new regime than he had been in the Czech articles. "Here we stand facing a situation which is not to our liking, which came about against our wishes and expectations, which, however, is a reality. . . . If we dare to proclaim a single 'No' to the present state of affairs, everything would be more simple and easy. But this is exactly what we cannot, and we must not, do."<sup>8</sup> This somewhat obscure sentence puzzles me. Why could he not say a single "No"? Moreover, is there anything in his previous declarations to lead one to think that the *coup* "came about against our wishes"? If it did, why then did he consent to his appointment (even though it had been made without his knowledge<sup>9</sup>) as a member of the Central Action Committee of the National Front, the most powerful body, aside from the government itself, for carrying out the "ruthless and unscrupulous" transformation of the bourgeois society? Did not this make him responsible for the acts of the Committee? How did that square with his professions of non-involvement?

His attitude toward the February *coup* was not shared by the majority of the members of his Church or of the Czechoslovak rank and file generally. He himself confessed that "the number of those who are ready to accept the situation without reservation is negligible."<sup>10</sup> He replied to those who disagreed with him by reiterating: "I accept the February step as the unavoidable and justifiable process of the social transformation of our life. . . . However, my attitude to the present regime is not that of an adaptation and self-identification. The center of gravity in my life and position is on another plane

from that of the present masters of Czechoslovakia. The perspective of my political decision essentially differs from the perspective of communism. However, I believe that the social and economic transformation of our life along the line of socialism cannot be 'contained' and halted. . . . The path of my faith and the path of the communistic activity intersect one another, but they are not identical; they are of an essentially different nature."<sup>11</sup> It may be interesting to note, however, that in the article he contributed to the studies preparatory to the Amsterdam Conference he expressed the positive conviction that "the Soviet system cannot be transplanted into a country of a different historical, moral, and cultural tradition. It is rooted, and has organically grown, in the soil tilled and cultivated by the Russian people, the Russian Church, and the Russian intelligentsia."<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the system *was* transplanted into quite a number of non-Russian countries, and Hromádka accepted it.

Hromádka's refusal to be identified with the present masters of Czechoslovakia, despite his membership in the Central Action Committee, indicated his uncertainty as to their ultimate aims: "The Communist-controlled regime may, with a sinister inner logic, drive our life into the straitjacket of a police state and a totalitarian system. However, I believe in the possibility of another alternative: that the Christian heritage and witness may prove to be a transforming power and keep the new socialistic or communistic order free from spiritual stagnation and impotence."<sup>13</sup> He expressed a similar sentiment in an interview when he voiced the hope that the revolutionary movement may be imbued with principles of truth and justice.<sup>14</sup> Such a belief has proved, in the light of the subsequent events, naive in the extreme. But, so far, Hromádka has steadfastly adhered to it.

Although the article quoted is decidedly courageous in its criticism of the communist regime, and represents perhaps the author's frankest disavowal of identification with that regime, yet for all practical purpose the die was cast: Hromádka chose to "accept the February event." But since he likewise repudiated any identification of himself with the Western social and cultural order,<sup>15</sup> he thus cut himself off from the West, but did not fully identify himself with the East. Under those circumstances, perhaps the best that he could have done would have been to stand aloof from both warring social orders and to have withdrawn "from 'the labyrinth of the world' into the sanctuary of faith and theology," as some of his friends had urged him to do.<sup>16</sup> But his active temperament, his driving urge to take part in the on-going life of society, and his ambition to be the "conscience" of the regime,



would not let him take refuge in neutrality. Henceforth, Hromádka was inevitably drawn ever deeper into cooperation with the government. For on the one hand, the regime was astute enough to realize that a man of his reputation and talents could be immensely useful to it. His services have indeed been invaluable to the regime, for he has been accepted as its spokesman among Protestants the world over. On the other hand, he was drawn at first into this relationship by his undoubtedly genuine desire to modify, to "Christianize," the policies of the regime. This motive was noble; but the assumption that he could thus change communist theory or practice was naive. And the result was tragic.

There is one other thing that must be mentioned before we proceed with the story: that is Hromádka's inexcusable judgment upon the death of Jan Masaryk. He had been a life-long and devoted admirer and disciple of Thomas G. Masaryk, and a friend of the adored President's son. Jan Masaryk, with his sister, Alice, often visited Hromádka's Princeton home. Hromádka also professed loyalty to President Beneš, whom Jan Masaryk supported by staying on in office despite his personal desire to resign. After Masaryk's death, Hromádka wrote a short article entitled, "Above the grave of Masaryk," in which the latter's suicide, which had been a protest against the policies of the communist government of which he had still been a member, was interpreted as a weakness in his character. Hromádka could not have failed to know the real sentiments of Masaryk vis-à-vis the communist regime; yet he wrote that "Jan Masaryk wanted to bear his burden even today, under the new circumstances; he wanted to bear it gladly—and I believe faithfully. . . . But despite that, he could not."<sup>17</sup> This is morally unforgivable. Hromádka knew that he had to break with his former "liberal" friends, and among them with Jan Masaryk, for he was obviously breaking with his own past. But could he not do it without discrediting Masaryk's motives? Was it "strength" on his part that he sided with the new masters of Czechoslovakia, and "weakness" on Masaryk's part that he protested at the cost of his life against what he regarded as the betrayal of all his father's principles?

Henceforth, Hromádka was inevitably drawn into the conflict on the side of the communist regime. In such a struggle, the rule obtains that "he who is not with us is against us." Hromádka's mild reservations and protestations against the Marxist theory or the Soviet practice—reservations which were neutralized by the fulsome and uncritical praise and the wilful refusal fully to acknowledge the dark side

of the Soviet realities, for only during the thirties had he recognized these dark aspects of Soviet life<sup>18</sup>—could not save him from becoming an active collaborator with the regime. The new career which thus opened before him brought him into the company of very strange theological bedfellows: on the one hand, that of Karl Barth who approved Hromádka's course.<sup>19</sup> It is interesting, and not a little puzzling, that both Barth and Hromádka have opposed Nazism but not communism. One wonders whether there is some hidden connection between the theological and political views of these outstanding theologians. On the other hand, Hromádka found himself associated with his old-time opponents, Professors Linhart and J. B. Kozák. The former was the leading spirit in the newly reorganized Society of Religious Liberals, whose chief aim was to produce a synthesis of Christianity with communism.<sup>20</sup> Thus the extremes met: the three men found themselves engaged in an essentially identical political enterprise, despite their very considerable theological differences.

Within a half a year after the *coup*, Hromádka was already recognized as the spokesman "for the East" in the world forum provided by the Amsterdam Assembly of the World Council of Churches of Christ (August 22–September 4, 1948). Although the Czech Brethren Church sent the official head of the Church, the synodical senior, Dr. Joseph Křenek, and Professor František Bednář and a dozen others, along with Dr. Hromádka, the latter was accorded the leading rôle. Dr. Křenek privately protested that Hromádka's attitude "does not represent our Church. We think differently." But in vain; he was ignored. Hromádka's speech followed directly upon that of John Foster Dulles, and was thunderously applauded. The report of Dulles' speech referred to him as "an American financier" whose address was "shallow, entirely lacking in theological thought, and optimistically uncritical toward the West."<sup>21</sup> By contrast, Hromádka's address was highly praised. Since it really represents an important statement of his views, I shall summarize it rather fully. Although there are three or four versions of the speech, each of them claiming to be the text delivered in Amsterdam, I shall use the version published in Hromádka's own periodical, *Křestanská Revue*, and compare it with the article, entitled "Our Responsibility in the Post-War World," and published in the official Amsterdam report.<sup>22</sup> It is most instructive to observe how much more radically anti-Western the speech is in contrast to the article.

The article begins with the assertion that the old international order has broken down. While the new structure is being built in place of

the defunct society, "the place of the Church is beyond all human, political, national and cultural divisions. . . . beyond all hatreds, fears, suspicions, political devices and platforms of the post-war world." This is Hromádka's declared basic principle, and a right principle it is. But it is doubtful whether he himself adheres to it. The assertion that "the Church is above society" must not be understood, he continues, in the sense that the Church is indifferent to, or neutral in, the social struggles, for they involve moral considerations. Because the conduct of "free democracies" since 1919 has resulted in the *débâcles* which have occurred subsequently, "serious misgivings exist as to the ability of Western democracy to safeguard the progress of a genuine political and national liberty, let alone of social security." In the speech at Amsterdam Hromádka sharpens his expression of this point by stating that the West is incapable of doing so. The Western powers "are united merely in their negative, hostile attitude to the Soviet Union and communism—and are depressingly weak in their positive, spiritual and intellectual convictions and faith." On the other hand, "the communists know what they want, are well disciplined, and are hard-working people."

What, then, is to be done in this dire situation? Is the decadent, weary West hopelessly doomed in its conflict with the youthfully virile, self-confident and clear-headed East? In the article, Hromádka seems to think that the situation is not quite so hopeless: "We do not advocate an attitude of compromise and 'appeasement'; we advocate an effort to revitalize what has been the creative genius of French, British and American democracy, and of civilization." But in the speech itself, he appears to be much more pessimistic concerning the Western possibility of a "reconstruction": "What can we offer toward the overcoming of the confusion and chaos of our day? Where is our Lord? What can we offer against 'atheism' which we denounce so frequently? Liberalism without conviction? Freedom without faith? Tolerance without our own commitment? Political rights without social foundation? Nostalgia after the old, bygone order of political and economic privilege? Economic well-being without soul? Liberty, but for what, for what goal?"<sup>23</sup> In this thesis, "the West has lost faith," Hromádka strangely approximates Arthur Koestler, who has pictured the same dilemma in his *Age of Longing*.

In analysing the situation in the East, Hromádka denies, in the first place, that communism may be properly classed as totalitarian. Communism, he declares, is essentially different from Nazism. It is not, correctly speaking, even atheistic. "Its atheism is rather a practical

reaction against the forces of the pre-socialistic society than a positive, philosophically essential tenet. In many ways . . . [it] is secularized Christian theology, often furiously anti-Church." Would not Marx, Lenin, and Stalin be surprised to learn from this professor of Christian theology that they were in reality no atheists at all, but merely befuddled and confused "secularized Christians!" Hence, to Hromádka, dialectical materialism is really not dialectical materialism at all, but merely a weapon against bourgeois capitalism. But has not Hromádka, the Barthian theologian, actually joined forces with his "liberal" colleague, Dr. Linhart, in creating a new "Christian Marxism?" In which case, does not *every* official communist declaration on the subject scornfully repudiate his interpretation? Communists are at least clear-headed and out-spoken in unambiguously and unequivocally asserting that they are atheists, and as such have no use for any form of Christianity (although they do have use for Christian churches, if the latter allow themselves to become their tools).

Not only is communist atheism not atheism, Hromádka continues, but it is really in a sense more Christian than the contemporary Christian churches themselves; for it represents "much of the emphasis of the living Church from the apostolic time, through the monastic orders, to the Reformation and liberal humanism. . . ." <sup>24</sup> He goes even so far as to insist that the dictatorship of the Soviet regime is only temporary and will ultimately "fade away," and that the official ideology will be "transformed," for it "reflects . . . the Christian longing for the fellowship of full and responsible love." This is utterly irresponsible, wishful thinking, without the slightest basis in anything the communists themselves have ever said on the subject. And this passes for a "realistic" Christian approach to the East!

Another astonishing assertion of Hromádka, who identifies the communist seizure of power in Russia as well as elsewhere, including his own country, with an inevitable and global historic overthrow of the bourgeois, capitalistic society by the proletarian forces, is that the communist regimes represent the will of the people. Hence, "even if the West had in the end military superiority, the Western powers would be morally and politically incapable of overcoming the problem of [how to win] the territory now under the Soviet regime—formed and integrated for the past thirty years by the communist party on the basis of the socialist order. This Soviet territory would oppose any attempt of the present Western rulers to return it to the pre-Soviet order of things." But the fact of the matter is that the overwhelming

majority of the Czechoslovak people would be only too happy to be liberated from their Soviet "liberators". The same is true of the Russian workers and peasants who have but little reason to regard communism as a beneficent social order which has secured for them political and economic justice.

Hromádka concludes his article by the totally unexpected exhortation: "Let us once more appeal to the leaders of the Soviet community and of the communistic parties to rely less on the violent methods of agitation, threat, deportation, trials and police control, and to arouse in man his noblest sentiments of sympathy for the poor, the weak, the helpless and the miserable, to awaken him to what is after all the core of socialistic humanism."<sup>25</sup> But has Hromádka himself appealed to the communist leaders of his nation (or any other nation) with these aims in view? Where in all his writings or the reports of his speeches or activities is there any evidence of such an appeal? And how does he expect historical materialism which denies human personality and reduces man "to a mere by-product of his social and economic environment"—as Hromádka himself asserts on the same page with the appeal—to "arouse in man his noblest sentiments"?

We gain further insight into his attitude toward communism in one of his most notable, and doubtless also most revealing, articles entitled, "The Church of the Reformation Faces Today's Challenges," which was published in *Theology Today*.<sup>26</sup> According to the editor's note, this is the text of a speech "delivered a few months ago to several thousand people in one of the large halls of Prague." But I do not find it in the Czech Church publications. In this speech one again hears the "authentic" Hromádka, courageous and unafraid, as we used to hear him during his stay in this country. As on so many other occasions, he again reiterates the thesis that the old order is gone, no matter how many people regret it. "All of us have a feeling of insecurity. Often we have an almost metaphysical horror when facing all the changes and upheavals." But has the Church ever been "at home" in this world? It was not "at home" in the Republic of Masaryk and Beneš; and "of course she is not, cannot be 'at home' in the Republic of Klement Gottwald." "The Church is above all political and cultural forces."

Nevertheless, the situation under Gottwald's regime is, after all, different. The leaders of the new Czechoslovakia "have not been affected by religious training and have almost nothing from the traditional religious culture." Moreover, they do not practice the easy-



going tolerance of the liberals. These people know what they want and are determined to get it. "Our schools and courts, our literature, our social and political atmosphere, are formed today by a definite ideology, backed by the masses that are burning with aggressive, decisive, and enthusiastic conviction."

What can the Church do about it? When must the Church accept changes in political and economic life, and when must she protest against threats to her spiritual functions? These are indeed difficult questions. For the changes are usually "accompanied by scandalous events. . . . For a time, various adventurers and scoundrels come to power in countries, towns, and villages. Thousands of people find themselves in the streets, having been thrown out of their houses, offices, and jobs."

But all such initial injustices will pass, Dr. Hromádka believes, and the real character of the revolutionary changes will at last emerge. "We should look at the new effort from the perspective of all historical and world occurrences; we should understand that what is going on is basically necessary, legitimate, and useful for the large masses of people." In fact, if the enemies of the new regime do not help these changes constructively, a worse revolution will overtake them: then "they will try to dig up Klement Gottwald and Antonín Zápotocký" out of their graves "with a little pin"! Hence, the duty of the Church is "not to exhaust herself by small protests and sullen moralization; she keeps her strength for effective criticisms and for the great 'No' to be said if someone tries to lead her away from God's authority and to subject her to a human authority." In Hromádka's judgment, the communist regime has not as yet tried to subject the Church "to a human authority," although just at the time when this speech was delivered the new church law was being discussed (and passed in December, 1949), which certainly did subject the Church "to human authority!" But Hromádka could see no wrong in the "ultimate aims" of the regime: "Who will rejoice more than a real member of the Church of Christ when injustice and class differences will be overcome by a classless society? Is not the longing for a classless society of human brotherhood and freedom an echo of the prophetic and Gospel message about Jesus Christ, the Son of God? . . . What could we have against the new order which does away gradually with violence, exploitation, and injustice? . . . But when the classless society will come into being, even then shall we meet with physical and spiritual disease, with sin and uneasiness of heart, with pride and selfishness, fornication and

dishonesty. . . . And it will become evident that even the new society will need the Church more than the Church will need the new society."

It seems almost incredible that this astute theologian could take seriously the flimsiest of the communist dogmas, that of the classless society. Does he really believe that injustice will be abolished merely by a change of an economic order? That human brotherhood will emerge when all men practice communist economy? Or that the most rigidly "monolithic" of totalitarian states—the Soviet government—will voluntarily commit suicide and "wither away?" And above all, that Christ Himself taught anything remotely resembling the communist "classless society?" And if Hromádka thinks so, how could he with the next breath assert that such a society will still need the Church? Can he point to a single official communist pronouncement which supports his concept of such classless society?

Perhaps no less important for the understanding of Hromádka's thinking on this subject is the speech he delivered, early in 1950, at a ministerial conference at Žilina in Slovakia.<sup>27</sup> After describing once more the collapse of the liberal epoch, and asserting that a return to the old social order is impossible, he then turns to the problem of what the churches are to do in this situation. On this occasion he treats the question more fully than at any previous time. The churches, he insists, are not to seek escape from this crisis, but must learn how to face it and deal with it. His analysis of the various reactions on the part of Christian churches is acute and comprehensive. Some church leaders think, he writes, that the crisis is only temporary and will pass, whereupon the old order will be restored. Others, particularly in Germany, rely on a revival of the old confessional solidarity. Still others link religion to political reaction against the new order. In this group are many Roman Catholics, but "also those Protestant groups which couple dogmatic reaction closely with political aid to all attempt of powers to defend the old order of things (*status quo ante*) either in the colonies or at home. It is worth mentioning that in the United States and Holland Protestant fundamentalists, who are not only fighting modernism but also the so-called dialectical theology of crisis (K. Barth and others), are among the most determined supporters of political, social, and international reaction: 'reaction' in the real, not merely 'slogan', meaning of the word." Continuing his analysis, Hromádka cites the Russian attempt to save the Church by adapting its theology to the dominant "official line." As examples of this category, he mentions the "Living Church" in the Soviet Union and the "German Christians" in the Nazi Reich. But

he includes in this category even those liberals who attempt to adjust religion to the currently fashionable philosophy or science. And lastly, Hromádka cites cases of collaboration, which term he defines as an unprincipled yielding to outward pressure in a spirit of opportunism.

"None of these ways," he declares, "is worthy of the Church of Christ, and would not be worthy of 'our' churches" . . . "We Czech Protestants used to boast of our political and cultural progressivism, in order that we might strengthen our Church in the modern Czech society. But who cares about our old progressivism today? . . . The sooner we get rid of it the better. . . . Perhaps the time has come when it is necessary to break the bonds of the old confessions, of the Church tradition, of the hide-bound immobility and self-complacency."

Thereupon, Hromádka eloquently demands an entirely new form of Christianity which would be in harmony with the contemporary realities. "Our realism of faith must be no less cogent than the realism of the builders of today who use their philosophical and scientific methods in order to escape from the world of illusion and of ossified concepts into the world of concrete reality . . . The conflict of faith must be carried on within the frame-work of actual social life, not on the sidelines, under the umbrella of false guesses . . . " "Only such a faith will assure freedom, dignity and responsibility to man living in the new, technically perfected society. . . . If we carry on the fight by means of force, we shall be crushed. But if we live amid the present events with understanding for all that is in the process of permanent construction, and depend solely on the Word of the Living God, we shall live fearlessly and call men to the law and witness, to mercy, humanity, and justice."

Furthermore, at the Lund Conference (1952) he amplified this point by saying that "*theologically speaking*" the Church is walking "between life and death. Every word and every category, every traditional church activity has to be re-thought, re-interpreted, re-evaluated as to its integrity and relevance. Many of us have rejected the notion that we can hibernate behind the old walls of confession, doctrine, or Church constitution. . . . We have to give up all the myths, superstitions, empty speculations, and idealistic illusions inherited from the past. . . . We have to give up many altars and idols. But we have to be on the alert lest we misread the signs of our times and lest we exchange new myths for the old ones."<sup>28</sup> When the news of this speech was reported in the daily press, I happened to be lecturing in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. The sensation-chasing newspaper reporter responsible for the item in the local papers omitted the key

words, "*theologically speaking*," and slanted the story as if Dr. Hromádka were at last telling the world the real situation of the Church in his homeland! For a while I shared the excitement which gripped my ministerial audience!

I can well imagine with what inspired eloquence, and with what conviction, these speeches were delivered! And yet, I would prefer less eloquence and more concreteness and clarity of formulation, less heat and more light. Surely, Hromádka has not abandoned his Reformation theology! Without identifying either Barth's or Hromádka's views with the old orthodoxy, one is yet puzzled by the latter's call for "an entirely new form of Christianity which would be in harmony with contemporary realities"? It sounds very much as if he were thinking of some radically changed theology, perhaps an adaptation to the current ideology—except that he had explicitly rejected such an attempt as unworthy. What then can he mean by talking about not "hibernating behind the old walls of confession, doctrine, or Church constitution"? Is he thinking of abandoning the theology or the constitution of his Church? And if not, what concretely does he mean? Is he merely being eloquent? At present, there is no answer to these questions.

A significant advance in Hromádka's thinking is registered in his speech at Debreczen in Hungary on the occasion of receiving an honorary degree at the Reformed Seminary (1953).<sup>29</sup> In it, he went farther than ever before in picturing the débacle of modern Christianity. For alluding to the missionary expansion of the past century and a half, he remarked: "The events since the end of the Second World War convince us that this attempt [i.e., the missionary expansion] has proved unsuccessful, that history even in its cultural aspect will be different from what we have imagined up to recently. Europeanization and Christianization of the world have collapsed. European and Christian nations had in mind their interests, their rule, comfort and wealth, rather than the good of the starving and exploited millions. The so-called Christian civilization did not give the man of today an answer to his difficult questions and needs . . . [Christian missions] became a part of the dying world. . . . According to all indications . . . human history will not follow the path of European Christian tradition, but will be fundamentally determined by the efforts and desires of the Soviet and the Asiatic (particularly the Chinese and the Indian) peoples. The European spirit penetrates future world history not in the classical Christian tradition, but by means of social and political revolutionary efforts which were

victorious in 1917 on the Soviet territory, and which will aid the awakened nations of the vast Asiatic expanse—and sooner or later in Africa as well.”<sup>30</sup>

This, then, is a considerably expanded application of the thesis—which Hromádka, despite all his disavowals of belief in the Marxist economic determinism and historical materialism, shares with all orthodox communists—that communism is “the wave of the future,” and that it is destined, inevitably and irresistibly, to conquer the world. Hitherto, he used to apply the thesis principally to the bourgeois liberal West; now he extends it to the whole world. And what is more, he identifies the revolutionary movement of the last few decades with the “Christ revolution”: “Jesus of Nazareth sweeps away our old world to which we have accustomed ourselves. He overthrows our altars, and shakes us in the depths of our life situations. The old values lose their worth. What we formerly little valued and what was loathsome to us, enters our lives in a new light.”<sup>31</sup> It is indeed difficult to imagine how Hromádka’s thesis could be developed further.

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<sup>1</sup> *Kostnické Jiskry*, Oct. 30, 1947.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Sept. 30, 1945.

<sup>3</sup> *Kostnické Jiskry*, Dec. 4, 1947.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Patriarkh Sergei i ego dukhovnoe nasledstvo* (Moscow, 1947).

<sup>6</sup> *Křesťanská Revue*, XV, 3 (March, 1948), 72.

<sup>7</sup> *Theology Today* (Princeton, N.J.), V, 2 (July, 1948), 271. All quotations are used by permission.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

<sup>9</sup> *The Christian Century* (May 12, 1948), 447.

<sup>10</sup> *Theology Today*, V, 2 (July, 1948), 274.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.

<sup>12</sup> *Man's Disorder and God's Design* (New York, 1948), IV, 139. Used by permission of the World Council of Churches.

<sup>13</sup> *Theology Today*, V, 276.

<sup>14</sup> *The Christian Century*, (May 12, 1948), 447.

<sup>15</sup> *Theology Today*, V, 276.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 274.

<sup>17</sup> *Kostnické Jiskry*, March 18, 1948.

<sup>18</sup> *Křesťanská Revue*, IV (1931) V (1932), and IX (1936).

<sup>19</sup> *Kostnické Jiskry*, April 15, 1948.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, September 2, 1948.

<sup>22</sup> *Man's Disorder and God's Design*, IV, 114–142; Cf. “Církev a dnešní mezinárodní situace,” in *Křesťanská Revue*, XV, 8 (October, 1948), 232–239.

<sup>23</sup> *Křesťanská Revue*, XV, 8 (October, 1948), 236.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

<sup>25</sup> *Man's Disorder and God's Design*, IV, 141.

<sup>26</sup> *Theology Today*, VI, 4 (January, 1950), 446 ff.

<sup>27</sup> *Křesťanská Revue*, XVIII, 6 (1951).

<sup>28</sup> *Theology Today*, IX, 4 (January, 1953), 468–69.

<sup>29</sup> *Křesťanská Revue*, XX, 6 (August, 1953).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Kostnické Jiskry*, August 2, 1953.



## Chapter V: In the Service of the Communist Regime

Having made himself the chief spokesman for Protestantism in the communist-dominated countries, Hromádka found it not only logical, but practically unavoidable, to collaborate with the new regime to an ever increasing degree. He has rendered the state an effective service, particularly through his membership in the World Council of Churches, such as no communist party member has done or could do. The effectiveness of his pronouncements, both in the speeches before important ecclesiastical gatherings and in the religious press, is really astounding. I find that in most gatherings where the relation of Christianity to communism is discussed, somebody is likely to refer to, and usually defend, Hromádka's views, or rather what he thinks are his views. If nothing else, some Christians are sorely confused by his views. The Czechoslovak government could hardly find another man, even of the party or its official ranks, to equal this non-party theologian in effective propaganda.

Among the various functions in which Hromádka serves the regime, the most intensive is the so-called Peace Campaign. In this activity he is only the most eminent among the church leaders who are likewise energetically engaged in this "struggle." For from the year 1950 on, the articles advocating "peace" and denouncing the Western democracies for war-mongering appear extremely frequently in the Church papers, sometimes in every issue. In many instances they read as if the Church had gone officially pacifist. For instance, Professor F. M. Dobiáš couched his views on "Church and War" in a pacifist vein,<sup>1</sup> although during the Nazi occupation he had been "warlike" enough. The Churches have officially made similar pronouncements: on April 1, 1951, a resolution was adopted at the meeting of the Czech Protestants, which called upon all Western Christians to appeal to their governments for cooperation with the Soviets, Communist China, and "other leading Asiatic nations," in stopping the Korean War and in the demilitarization of Western Germany.<sup>2</sup> The official heads of all the Protestant (and the Catholic) churches regularly issue peace appeals at the Christmas and Easter seasons.

In this "Peace Campaign" Hromádka became the leading Czechoslovak figure. He has been a delegate to almost all the Peace Congresses. Upon his return from the Congress in Berlin (July 1-6, 1952), he declared himself convinced, on the basis of alleged scientific

proofs, of the bacteriological warfare waged by the allies in Korea. No wonder that in July, 1953, he received the first Czechoslovak Peace Award!

But how are the Protestant churches treated by the communist government in view of the promise of "full freedom of religion and worship?" Have these promises been kept? Despite the oft-repeated assertion that the churches in Czechoslovakia enjoy full religious liberty, an assertion made by Dr. Hromádka and the official spokesmen for the churches, the evidence does not corroborate these statements. In 1949, the communist regime passed a new law regulating the relations between church and state, and defining the new status for the ecclesiastical organizations. The law was patterned after the legislation of the Soviet Union. For the Russians, after having waged a war of extermination against the Orthodox and other churches, adopted a new ecclesiastical policy in 1939 which in effect changed the strategy of the struggle, while retaining the original goal. Instead of attempting to destroy the Church by a frontal attack—an attempt which proved a failure—the regime adopted the technique of making the churches subserve the cause of communism. This is plainly apparent even in such an official publication as *Patriarkh Sergei i ego dukhovnoe nasledstvo*, issued by the Moscow patriarchate.<sup>3</sup> Since that time the same technique has been applied to the "satellite" countries, the only difference being in the tempo: in Poland, for instance, more time has been required to carry it out than in Hungary or Czechoslovakia.

Accordingly, the Czechoslovak law published in 1949 declares that all religious bodies, even those which were formerly not recognized by the state (the small Congregational, Baptist, Methodist, and Unitarian groups) enjoy equal status before the law. Church and state are not separated, but the former is placed under the control of the State Office for Religious Affairs. Since all Church property in land was confiscated (a measure which affected chiefly the Roman Catholic Church), the state assumes the obligation of paying the salaries of the clergy of whatever denomination, and of paying most of the expenses connected with the maintenance of public religious worship and instruction. The churches are required to present an annual report of their operations, and submit a budget for the next year.

The Roman Catholic Church opposed the law strenuously, on the ground that it subjected the Church to the state. The Czechoslovak, the Orthodox, and the Unitarian Churches, as well as the Jews, accepted it. The Czech Brethren and the Slovak Evangelical Churches at first defended the principle of voluntary support of their communion,

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but in the end capitulated to the demands of the state (December, 1949). This was done on "the assurance that the present organization of the Church and the manner of its work shall not be changed. The ministers shall indeed receive their salaries from the state, but do not thereby become state employees: they are appointed by the Church, and are subject to it and not to the state."<sup>4</sup> This was the optimistic view of the situation taken by Dr. A. Boháč, Curator of the Czech Brethren Church, who spoke in behalf of the whole Synodical Council. One of the members of the Hus Theological Faculty wrote that "As regards the Protestant Churches, their loyalty to the government and the Republic is beyond doubt. This was expressed on several occasions, although not ostentatiously and loudly, because such has not been the tradition of the Church. Protestant citizens will do their duty as the Law of God commands, and thus will they best render their service to the nation and the state."<sup>5</sup> But despite these fulsome assurances, the ministers of the Church at their next synodical meeting expressed their concern and disquiet over the possible subjugation of the Church to the state, as even the representative of the State Office, J. Plíhal, recently admitted.<sup>6</sup>

Among the consequences of the new law was a decree reorganizing all theological seminaries in the country: all professors of these institutions were deprived of their office and only those were reappointed who were regarded as "politically reliable." The purpose of this legal skulduggery is quite obvious: in the Roman Catholic seminaries, against which the measure was chiefly aimed, all the "undesirables" were eliminated at one stroke, and "reliable" men were substituted for them.

As for the Hus Theological Faculty, which represented a combined training center of the larger and slavishly subservient Czechoslovak Church as well as the Czech Brethren Church, it was at that time divided into two separate faculties. The former body retained for itself the old name of John Hus Theological Faculty, while the latter received the name of Comenius Protestant Theological Faculty. Furthermore, the formerly independent training schools of the smaller Protestant denominations were integrated into the latter Faculty. Moreover, when the school year of 1950 opened, and the names of the newly appointed members of the Comenius Faculty were made public, the name of one of the oldest members of that body was not among them. No official mention of the fact appeared in the press, and no recognition of his long and distinguished services was made by Hromádka, the new dean. Recently, another member of that faculty

was retired before he reached the age limit. But the occasion was remarkable for another fact as well: a new full professor of the "social sciences" was named, and two docents of the same subject were associated with him. Thus the "social sciences" now constitute the largest department in the Faculty, and one need not be in any doubt what kind of "social sciences" they are! The three newly appointed members of the faculty have hitherto been practically unknown in the Church circles, and I would not be surprised to learn that they are communist party members. The entire faculty made a special solemn pledge before the head of the State Office for Ecclesiastical Affairs, one of the most notorious political figures in the regime, Zdeněk Fierlinger, promising to fulfill their duties in accordance with the new law.

In a recently published book, *Report from Christian Europe*, written by the well-known American Lutheran who had spent many years in Europe, Stewart W. Herman, there occurs a sentence which bears eloquent testimony to the misinformation which is not uncommon even among the "elect." "Not one minister of the Church of the Czech Brethren," writes Dr. Herman, "to which he [Hromádka] belongs, appears to have had serious difficulties with the state . . ." But in this he is mistaken, although not too seriously. One of the outstanding ministers of Prague was sent to a concentration camp soon after the communist regime came to power, but must remain nameless for fear of reprisals against him or his relatives. Another minister escaped abroad and is now in the United States. Some were transferred to out of the way parishes. The Slovak Lutheran bishop, Ruppelt, was deprived of his office. But the more serious cases are those which involve ministers of the smaller Protestant denominations: a Methodist minister, who is an American citizen, was ordered to leave the country on a 48-hour notice. A Congregational minister (whose wife is an American citizen), was also ordered to leave, but was fortunate enough to induce the official who supervised the case to allow him to take his son along. He is now in this country. The most notorious case involves four Czech Baptist leaders who, after having been imprisoned in 1952, and held "incommunicado" until 1953, were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment for "espionage," and one of them for "treason." Since their imprisonment was publicized in the press, both at home and abroad, they may be referred to by name. Dr. Jindřich Procházka, director of the Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague, who spent the years during the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia in this country where he had been closely associated with Dr. Hromádka in the publication of *The People of Hus* and in other

ways, was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment. He was accused of having plotted his spy rôle with the leaders of the World Baptist Alliance in this country: the latter allegedly promised him very considerable financial aid from funds contributed by many American financiers, especially by John D. Rockefeller, Jr. The information obtained by Procházka was allegedly passed by the Baptist leaders to the State Department. An American Baptist minister of Czech origin wrote to Dr. Hromádka begging him to intervene in behalf of Dr. Procházka, but received no answer. The other three Czech Baptists were the Rev. Jan Ríčař, president of the Chelčický Unity of Brethren (the Baptist body), who signed the Easter Peace Message in 1952; he was not only accused of espionage, but of high treason as well. Hence, he received the heaviest penalty—18 years in prison. Furthermore, the Rev. Cyril Burget, secretary of the Baptist headquarters in Prague, and the Rev. Michael Kešjar, president of the Slovak Baptist Unity, were sentenced to seven and five years imprisonment respectively. All lost their citizenship rights and their property was confiscated. According to the latest, as yet unconfirmed report, still another Baptist preacher, the Rev. Mr. Mareš, was sent to prison for a term of four years. The spurious character of the charges is clearly apparent: the financial aid received by the smaller Protestant groups, chiefly from America, was used as the basis for the charges of espionage. This is the standard procedure, used in similar "trials" in Hungary and Bulgaria.

At the subsequent Conference of the Baptist denomination, its leadership was completely reorganized. Moreover, in a resolution, the conference acknowledged that "some of our preachers, even those who stood at the head of our Church, abused the trust which we and our fatherland had placed in them, and betrayed our state. . . ."<sup>8</sup>

Accordingly, any notion that the churches in Czechoslovakia are free in the same sense in which we in the United States understand the term must be radically modified. The ministers are free to preach and to carry on their traditional functions, provided they also loyally support and further the political program of the regime. At the 1953 meeting of the Synod of the Czech Brethren Church, this give-and-take relationship between the Church and the state was clearly stated by the representative of the State Office for Ecclesiastical Affairs, J. Plíhal. In his speech he outlined the benefits which the Church has enjoyed at the hands of the state during the past three years, and then made plain what the state specifically expected in return: advocacy of the unification of East and West Germany "in one peace-loving, democratic state," and participation in the "peace campaign."<sup>9</sup>



Understood from the communist point of view, these objectives certainly constitute political tasks which the Church would ignore or refuse to undertake only at its own peril. Moreover, the Church has for years been unremittingly engaged in the furthering of these objectives.

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<sup>1</sup> *Český Bratr*, XXVIII, 3 (March, 1951), 34-35.

<sup>2</sup> *Kostnické Jiskry*, April 12, 1951.

<sup>3</sup> Moscow, 1947.

<sup>4</sup> *Český Bratr*, XXV, 8-9 (November, 1949).

<sup>5</sup> *Kostnické Jiskry*, August 28, 1949.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, Nov. 11, 1953.

<sup>7</sup> Stewart W. Herman, *Report from Christian Europe* (New York, 1953), 142. Used by permission of Friendship Press.

<sup>8</sup> *Kostnické Jiskry*, December 21, 1953.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, November 11, 1953.

## Chapter VI:

### A Critique of Dr. Hromádka's Politics

In summing up Dr. Hromádka's analysis of the current world catastrophe and the conclusions based upon understanding of the facts, we must, first of all, clearly distinguish between his Christian faith and his political and economic views. I have full confidence in his sincerity, his loyalty to Christ and His cause, and even in his devotion to the Christian Church. Although I do not share his theological interpretation of Christianity, for I regard Barthianism as an extreme reaction to the right against the extreme liberal movements of the left, yet I have no quarrel with any man on that account. I feel united with Hromádka in the bond of Christian faith and love, despite the very real differences in the realm of political and economic opinions which separate us.

Accordingly, I gladly testify to Dr. Hromádka's unusual sensitiveness to the need for the transformation of our society in accordance with the ideals of justice and equity. And society today, both West and East, certainly needs transforming. It has grown increasingly secularist, and in the Soviet Union this cultural tendency has reached its most acute stage—that of atheism. We are facing a crisis of global proportions and many people, Christians among them, are unaware of, and complaisant about, this grave situation. Perhaps, we are actually witnessing the end of the humanistic era—as Nicholas Berdyaev and a number of other astute thinkers suppose—and the beginning of something new of which only dim outlines have as yet appeared. I am unwilling to pass judgment on a question of such tremendous complexity and difficulty, even though I am painfully aware of many signs which indicate that these "pessimists" may be right. It may well be that the two giant power blocks into which the world today is divided will ultimately clash in an Armageddon in which either one or the other will emerge victorious, or more likely both will destroy themselves. Or, it may be that the one or the other world power will destroy itself from within, by its own rottenness and decay. For evil always destroys itself. It would not be a moral universe if such were not the case.

It is likewise true that the Christian churches have not borne as effective a witness to the social implications of the Gospel as they should have done; in this matter, some are undoubtedly more guilty than others. But be it remembered that the liberal Christians, so

severely criticized by Dr. Hromádka, have a better record of accomplishment in this regard than the Barthian group. But again it is easy to overstate the responsibility of the Christian churches and to lay blame on them for policies and actions which are not within their control: for the Christian churches do not hold the dominant position in society that they once occupied. There are no "Christian nations" today, but only Christians within each nation. Liberal democracies have separated the Church from the state, and have practically monopolized all functions of a temporal nature which they once shared with the Church.

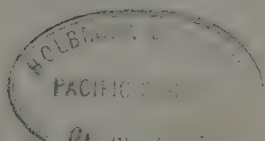
The totalitarian states, both fascist and communist, claim the supreme loyalty for themselves, and either eliminate the Church from any influence upon society altogether, or restrict it within purely cultic limits. The ultimate aim of these latter regimes, even where the churches are still allowed to function, is to destroy them and to "liquidate" all religion as superstition. This is the publicly declared goal of the communist regimes everywhere, and there is no reason why we should not take them at their word. Hence, it is unfair to lay the blame for the social evils upon the churches as if they were exclusively or primarily responsible for them. I regard it as unjust to blame the Russian Orthodox Church for the evils which afflict the Russian people, and the Czech Brethren Church for the exploitation to which the Czechoslovak people are subjected, as I do when Dr. Hromádka pontifically condemns the Western churches on a similar charge, and confuses Christian missions with nationalistic expansion or commercial imperialism. The Soviet Union is as guilty of political and commercial imperialism as any Western democracies have ever been, and the Czechoslovak people have been exploited far worse under Gottwald and Zápotocký than they had been—as the communists allege—under Masaryk and Beneš. When has the present leadership of the Russian Church or of the Czech Brethren Church protested against the tyrannies of their governments? When has Dr. Hromádka, that fearless and inspiring fighter against Nazism while he was in the United States, raised his voice with equal clarity against the iniquities of the present rulers of Czechoslovakia?

What, then, is the primary task of the Christian churches today? I dare to say, and say it deliberately, that it is the spiritual transformation of society. Only good men and women can transform society. Even the best systems, whether economic, political, or cultural, may be subverted to the worst uses by evil men. Thus the transformation is primarily a spiritual, and not merely an economic or political task, as

Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist communism teaches. Whatever technological or other improvements mankind achieves, they are good only in so far as they are controlled by men of good will. Otherwise, they are certain to prove to be means of destruction.

To be sure, the Church cannot build a new world alone; other agencies of the political, economic, and cultural order also have a part in the vast task. The Church must cooperate with such forces of the secular order, but must choose among them only those it deems closest to the spirit of Christ. To that degree, the Church cannot be "neutral." We Protestants do not advocate, as the Catholics do, a retrogression to some imagined medieval unities of the Church with the state. We cannot advocate even a return to the Reformation. Moreover, our choice is limited by what is available and practically possible, which is never the ideally best; and even so there are legitimate differences about such a choice among Christians. Our task is to cherish and preserve whatever is best in our modern society, and imbue it with the spirit of Christ.

Thus, although necessarily taking a part in our society, the Church must live in the world without being of the world: for the Church is "above" any given political or economic order—a principle which Dr. Hromádka also upholds, but which he unfortunately immediately neutralizes by advocating in a one-sided fashion the communist system as the only just one. I would have no objections to such of his strictures of the West that are really just, if he applied the same-yard-stick to the East. We Western Christians by and large believe that democracy is, of the available or practicable political systems, the closest to the Christian ideal. It undoubtedly has its faults, and is often subverted to other than its professed highest uses. But as Lincoln said of it, democracy is like a raft: one gets his feet wet, but then the thing never sinks! It is in this matter that we fundamentally disagree with Dr. Hromádka's judgment that "liberal democracy" no longer exists anywhere on earth, or that communism is therefore "the wave of the future." Since he believes it, it is no wonder that he has consistently followed the official communist "party line." It is, then, understandable that he could serve as the principal Czechoslovak delegate in the world "peace movement," which is known in the West for what it really is—cheap political trickery. Along with Dr. Viktor Hájek, the present synodical senior of the Czech Brethren Church, he protested against the Korean War resolution of the World Council of Churches adopted at Toronto, although he himself has constantly urged Korean peace on Soviet terms, and has accepted the base



charge that the allied forces have waged bacteriological warfare. He has likewise advocated the "unification" of Germany on the Soviet pattern. Since 1948 he has never publicly recognized the actual political and economic injustices of the Soviet regime, known as real by the testimony of reliable witnesses and students of the subject, while his own lurid, distorted, and exaggerated description of Western democracies remind one of Picasso's "nightmares of diseased imagination." In short, Hromádka has succumbed to the view of the Grand Inquisitor in Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*, that happiness of mankind cannot be secured except by force and chicanery, by giving men bread at the cost of their freedom—save that communist regimes have failed to provide the bread!

Furthermore, despite his denials, Hromádka in reality has adopted the basic and essential principle of the Marxist philosophy, i.e., that the communist order of society must inevitably, irresistibly, and unfailingly secure victory over the old order. Although he himself is not a professed communist, he holds this article of faith as firmly as any communist party member. He presumably still repudiates the principal tenet of the Marxist "dialectical materialism" that "economic forces" must inevitably bring about the classless society as surely as other natural forces—gravitation, for instance—operate in their particular sphere. The acceptance of such a tenet would place him outside the Christian church. But if he does not accept "dialectical materialism," why does he hold to its conclusions?

Moreover, if the "economic forces" operate scientifically, why denounce capitalism as "unjust?" Ethics has no place in naturalistic determinism. Even Marx held it as a self-evident axiom that there could not be an antithesis unless there had first been a thesis; hence, there cannot be a proletarian class without capitalists. Lenin, of course, disregarded this axiomatic Marxist principle, and declared to his astonished Bolshevik fellow-leaders that in Russia (which certainly had no highly developed capitalism in 1917) the capitalistic stage of development must be omitted and Russia must jump from feudalism directly into communism. But Marx proved right as against Lenin: to this day the Soviet Union does not have the communist economy or the communist order of society, whether political or social. What does prevail there is state capitalism. For in Russia there is only one capitalist, the state, which employs the entire nation in its enterprises, but without the check of competition or of the workers' right to strike. And even so the economy cannot operate without slave labor. As for the political form prevailing there, it is the most rigid of totalitarianisms,



a dictatorship not of the proletariat, but by a small clique of men, or by one man alone, and over the proletariat, even over the Communist party itself. In the social organization, far from the classless society, the small and highly privileged class exploits the vast masses of the workers. This vicious system is not "Christ's revolution," not even Marx's revolution, but a travesty on all social justice. Communism does not represent the beginning of a new order of social justice, but the last stage of the old secularist era which, by destroying faith in God, has also denied faith in man. It has degraded man to the level of a mere economic tool, "a handle of the grind-organ" as Dostoevsky used to say. No good society can be built on such a foundation.

Our further disagreement with Hromádka rests on Christ's principle that "by their fruits ye shall know them." He argues that capitalism as an economic system is unjust, exploiting, and contrary to the Christian ethic; and that democratic political liberties are empty and meaningless because they are devoid of economic equity; hence, communism, by contrast, represents social justice for the masses of workers and even human dignity and true democracy. Such theoretical arguments could perhaps have been held by idealistic people up to the early thirties, before the Soviet leaders gave the lie to their belief that something could be salvaged from the Russian experiment by plunging the Russian people into a greater political and economic misery than they had ever suffered under the tsarist regime. They are no longer possible for informed and open-minded people, for experience denies such claims. It is only by ignoring, or even denying what is a commonplace to informed people outside the Iron Curtain, that Hromádka is able to retain the illusion that Soviet communism represents a just and free social order. His argument, therefore, is unconvincing to those who, holding to Christian principles, desire along with him a transformed social order.

But let no one suppose that because we do not identify communism with social justice, we therefore uphold and defend the injustices of Western society, whether they be political or economic. No! The Christian Church is above all human social orders. It has the duty of raising its voice against every injustice in every society, whether it be communist or capitalist, and to declare the righteous judgments of God upon all who do evil, in the confidence that God shall not be mocked!

And finally, communism is incompatible, both as a system of thought and a code of ethics, with Christianity. For atheism is basic to the philosophy of dialectical materialism, and both Christian faith and experience with the radical secularist movements of the last hundred

years confirm the conclusion that the denial of God necessarily results in the denial of the spiritual nature of man. To believe in less than God is to be less than man. It seems, therefore, wholly fantastic to assert, as Dr. Hromádka does, that communism is really a form of "secularized Christianity," and that in time it will throw off its atheism as non-essential to its real core. No responsible leader of communism has as much as breathed any such idea.

Dr. Hromádka exhorts the Western Christians not to rely on "guesses" in regard to the future, assuming thereby that the communist victory is a matter of scientific certainty. But what if his prediction of the future transformation of communism into some theistic system, or perhaps even into Christianity, should prove a "guess"—as we are certain it is? What shall become of Christianity in a communist-dominated world in view of the repeated declarations of all official leaders of communism that all religion must be eliminated as superstition, and its place taken by science? Should Christians willingly cooperate with a movement determined to destroy the Church along with all religion, and with men who are effectively carrying out this aim? We are not misled by the opportunist policies at present adopted by world communism in order to postpone the final struggle with religion until after they are politically and economically firmly entrenched. And we are not deluded regarding the real and ultimate aims of communism.

It is for that reason that I have characterized Dr. Hromádka, in sorrow rather than in anger, as "the prophet of doom." I know quite well that he would violently protest against my omission of the complementary characterization, "and of resurrection" (to follow the title of one of his books). Nor am I unaware of his many and eloquent professions of faith to the effect that "after the crucifixion comes the resurrection, after the Good Friday comes the Easter morn." Far it be from me not to acknowledge the numerous assertions of his faith in the survival of the Church of God beyond any and all crises, in the present or the future. But what vitiates all such assertions is his equally dogmatic assertion that communism is destined to conquer the world and that we Christians must help in the conquest. If communism should become victorious, then the conflict with the Christian Church is inevitable; and given time, communist leaders are determined to impose their creed upon the coming generations by every means at their disposal, and to exclude religion from any influence upon society altogether. Islam has dechristianized the very cradle of Christianity—Palestine—as well as the principal scene of the Apostle Paul's mis-

sionary labors among the Gentiles—Asia Minor. Egypt and Northern Africa, once the home of the most brilliant of Christian fathers, Origen, Cyprian, and Augustine, today are solidly Mohammedan, save for the pitifully small remnants of the original Christian communions. We, therefore, hold that no Christian can sincerely believe in the “resurrection” of Christianity when at the same time he actively cooperates with the forces of doom. It is not reasonable to suppose that the survival of Christianity may be rightfully expected only where Christians oppose the faith of communism with even more determined faith in the truth and rightness of the gospel of Christ?

In conclusion, then, let us affirm our conviction that communism, far from being able to create a new and better world order, will collapse as the result of its own inner weakness and falsity. We believe that only good is permanent, and that evil destroys itself. The collapse of communism may be accelerated, even without war, if the democratic nations of the world be united and on guard against any further communist aggression; if by a spiritual revolution they get rid of the social evils which infect their own body politic; and if they aid the oppressed peoples everywhere—both inside and outside the Iron Curtain—to secure for themselves a better life. The supreme task of the Church in this common objective is, as it has ever been in the past, to preach the gospel in the confidence that God’s power will thereby transform men dominated by their own perverse will into His own obedient children. Our aim is to produce responsible persons filled with the love and spirit of Christ, who will transform society in accordance with the mind of Christ. The fault that the Kingdom carries is not that of Christianity but of Christians. And the way to transform the evil world into one imbued with the spirit of Christ is not merely by changing the environmental forces—economic or political—but by changing men.



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